

# PC ZONE

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£4.99 June 1997 ISSUE 51 EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PC GAMES!

THE GAME THAT  
LUCASARTS SAID  
THEY'D NEVER MAKE!

**FREE!**  
Terracide Overlay



## THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND

**STUCK ON C&C: RED ALERT?**

Check out our level by level  
guide to the Soviet Missions

Are You The Best PC  
Gamesplayer in Britain?

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Only Have A Go If You  
Think You're Hard Enough

**INTERSTATE 76**

The coolest game ever?

**MAGE SLAYER**

Raven take a new  
angle on Quake

Twinsen  
Returns in  
LBA2



**Exclusive!**  
**STAR WARS:  
SUPREMACY**  
COULD THIS REALLY BE  
COMMAND & CONQUER  
IN SPACE?

**THE BEST GAMES EVER!**

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# "Are you bo

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# d enough?"



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It looks absolutely gorgeous, but is there any gameplay in among all the gloss?

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Like it or not, motion capture's here to stay. Hardly a month goes by without a footie game arriving in the office accompanied by a press release explaining how sophisticated the motion capture techniques are. Of



course, it is used for other things, some of which are very sinister indeed. We take an in-depth look at the techniques that spawned a million footie games, and speculate as to what we'll see a few years down the line.





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## Curse Of Monkey Island

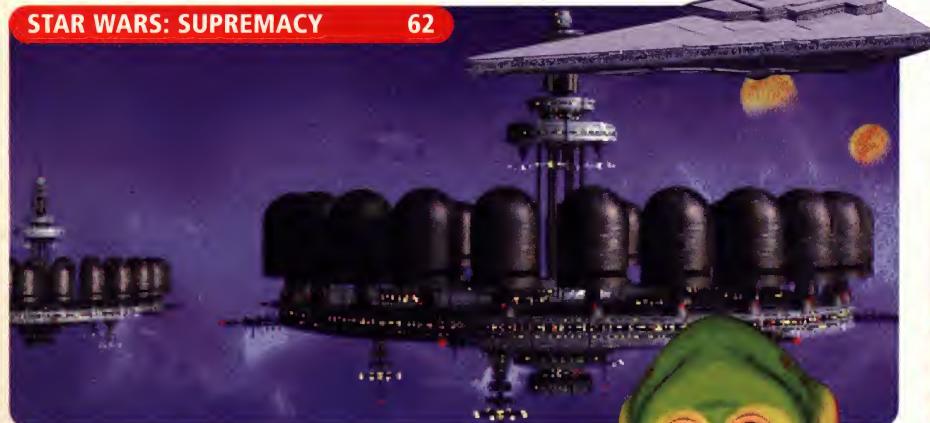
We take an **EXCLUSIVE** look at the game LucasArts said they'd never make and chat to the developers who have taken over from Ron Gilbert with the aim of producing the funniest and most entertaining point-and-click adventure ever. See page 40.



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# CD ZONE



## Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's being a total bast? Don't worry - phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

### HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990  
Any week day between 9am and 4pm

### CD-ROM HELP

Phone ABT on 01708 250250  
Any week day between 11am and 6pm  
(Please DO NOT phone the PC Zone office as your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

## No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

CD Exchange (S1), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing,  
19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ

Your details (please print clearly)

Name: .....

Address: .....

Post code: .....

Please make cheques payable to:

**DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.**

CDs from previous issues are also available.

# On the disc

**T**his month's CD is packed with some excellent demos that should keep you busy right through the next month. To access the software on this month's CD from Windows 95, pop the CD in the drawer and double-click on the CD icon on your desktop. Simply double-click on the BROWSER.EXE file

and this will launch the CD browser program which will enable you to select and install this month's demos.

If you're running your machine under DOS, insert the CD and change to your CD-ROM drive (the default command is usually <D:>). Type <PCZONE.EXE> to launch the browser.

## Contents

Click here to access the DOS demos on this month's CD

Click here to explore the Internet stuff, cartoons and the Our Price chart

Click here to see how some of the hottest new games are shaping up

### DOS Demos

Our round up of the month's latest DOS games.

### Windows

All the latest Windows and Windows 95 demos, Internet essentials and the top utilities that no PC should be without.

### Regulars

Cartoons, competitions and more...

### Hotshots

Take a look at some games still in development.

Click here to access the plethora of Windows demos on offer this month

Click here to go back to the C:\ prompt and quit the CD

## Installation shortcuts

If for some reason the front end to the CD won't run properly you can still install each demo by bypassing the front end altogether.

Simply switch to the appropriate directory (as shown on the table below), type the install command (you can either type it in as one long line or press <ENTER> after each back slash) and then press <ENTER>.

For example, if you wanted to run EIDOS'

BLOOD demo you'd type the following:

Type CD DOSDEMOS <ENTER>

Type CD BLOOD <ENTER>

Type INSTALL.EXE <ENTER>

The game should then install itself to your hard drive. To run the game, change to the install directory and double-click on the .EXE file.

### Manual installation commands

Demo	Directory/installation line
Blood	DOSDEMOS/BLOOD/Install.exe
Comanche 3	DOSDEMOS/COMANCHE/Install.exe
Darklight Conflict	DOSDEMOS/DARKLITE/Darklite.zip
Interpose	DOSDEMOS/INTERPOS/Interpos.exe
KKND	DOSDEMOS/KKND/KKND/KKND.Zip
PGA Golf	DOSDEMOS/PGA_TOUR/PGA_Demo.bat
Quiver	DOSDEMOS/QUIVER/QUIVER/Quiver.bat
Cricket	windemos\gamedemo\cricket\setup.exe
Daytona	windemos\gamedemo\daytona\daytona.exe
Flight Unlimited 95	windemos\gamedemo\flight\flight.exe
Interstate 76	windemos\gamedemo\intstate\i76demo.exe
Outlaws	windemos\gamedemo\outlaws\outdemo.exe
Space Rocks	windemos\gamedemo\spacelsr3d95sw.exe
Treasure Island	windemos\gamedemo\treasure\disk1\setup.exe
3-D Mini Golf	windemos\gamedemo\minigolf\minigolf.exe
NBA Jam Extreme	windemos\gamedemo\mbajam\setup.exe
Subspace	windemos\gamedemo\subspace\124\subspace.exe
Pod	windemos\gamedemo\pod\winpod.exe



### MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

You'll need at least a Pentium 75 with 8Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM. Many of the programs are designed to run under Windows 95 and as a result, some of them may require 16Mb RAM to run satisfactorily.

Where appropriate, we've included the minimum specifications as a guide to each individual game demo.



# INTERSTATE 76

ACTIVISION (DOS)



**T**HE COMPUTER GAME EQUIVALENT OF THE BEASTIE BOYS' *Sabotage* video, *Interstate 76* is a game in which the world of sideburns, wah-wah pedals and jive-talkin' collides head-first with polygon-based, three-dimensional, car-racing shenanigans. As the title suggests, it's all set in 1976, although apparently this is "a different 1976" (so it might as well be 1946, really). Anyway, you're a David Soul-with-a-tache bloke named Groove Champion. It could happen. Don't be deceived by the wheelbound nature of the gameplay: *Interstate 76* is not a racing game. The object is to track down a load of bad guys and then car them to death. The missions are structured a bit like space combat games: you've even got a wingman (the supremely cool Taurus) to help you out. If you get stuck, consult the helpfile.

## TODAY IS YESTERDAY, WATCH AND SMILE

Perhaps *Interstate 76* represents the first in a new wave of games inspired by '70s trash culture. Trouble is, it's all based on *American* stuff. What about us Brits, eh? How about a *Tiswas* Phantom Flan Flinger *Quake* clone, or maybe a Bay City Rollers drag-racing game. Or a beat 'em up starring Felicity Kendal, the Wombles, Ed 'Stewpot' Stewart, Jenny Hanley, Marc Bolan, Timothy Claypole from *RentaGhost* and Giant Haystacks. Actually, I think I'll patent that last idea. It sounds like a winner. (No it Goddamn does not - Transatlantic Marketing Head)

### CONTROLS:

[CONTROL] [F1]	Cockpit view
[CONTROL] [F2]	External camera
[↑] [↓] [←] [→]	External camera control
[CONTROL] [F4]	Track next object

NOTE: Numlock must be off for number pad to work.

Accelerate	[8] (joystick forward)
Brake	[2] (joystick back)
Steer	[4] [6] (joystick left/right)
Emergency brake	[Z]
Reverse	[BACKSPACE]
Fire weapon	Spacebar (joystick button 1)
Cycle weapon	[ENTER] (joystick button 2)
Link similar weapons	[L]
Weapon camera toggle	[W]

Radar on/off	[SHIFT] [R]
Radar range	[R]
Target frontal enemy	[E]
Target next enemy	[T]
Cancel target	[V]
Zoom in	[DEL]
Zoom out	[PG DN]
Reset	[END]
Sit tapping key in vain	[G]
Glance down (view dash)	[↓] (joystick hat down)
Glance left/right	[←] (joystick hat left/right)
Glance back	[↑] (joystick hat up)
Binoculars on/off	[B]
Headlights on/off	[H]
Start	[S]
Horn	[J]
View map	[M]
View notepad	[N]
Pause	[ALT] [P] or [PAUSE]
Exit sim	[CTRL] [Q]

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*Bike as seen in the game.*



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## BLOOD EIDOS INTERACTIVE (DOS)

**B**LOOD REPRESENTS THE VERY LATEST IN DUKE NUKEM-STYLE TECHNOLOGY and gore-encrusted mayhem. It's got a plot and everything, but we couldn't give a fiddler's pluck about that, and nor could you. The upshot of it is that you run around and kill things. As you'd expect with a game called *Blood* it's not aimed at children, the squeamish, or *Daily Mail* columnists. It's a bit like taking part in a reconstruction of *Evil Dead II*, really. The weapons are pleasantly unconventional — we're talking pitchforks and flare guns here — and the gameplay offers a fairly steep challenge. This demo, in the grand tradition of so many 3D blasters, offers you the first episode of *Blood* in its entirety: you'll need to buy the final release to get the remaining three.

### THE GEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY

*Blood* offers something for mindless thugs of all persuasions. Check out these weapons, dude. And bear in mind that there's more on offer in the retail version. Kay? Kay!

#### Pitchfork

The weapon of choice for ignorant villagers and cuckolded farmers is surprisingly effective against walking armies of the undead. Best of all, it requires no ammo, so it's always there for you, just when you need it most. Just like we are. Because we love you. Fancy a shag?

#### Flare gun

Let off a flare, and it buries itself in your enemy's chest cavity, then ignites a few seconds later, causing a full-on 'human fireball' situation to arise. Ideal for children's parties (but only if you like children toasted, that is). Try the 'alternative fire' button for widespread mayhem.

#### Sawn-off shotgun

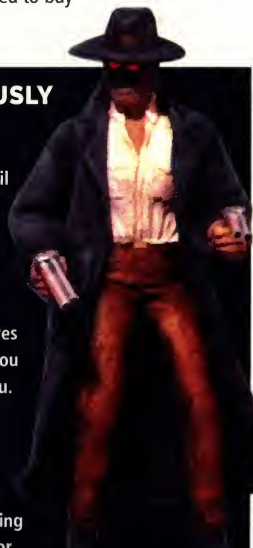
The star of TV's *Crimewatch UK* makes its second appearance on this month's cover CD (there's also one in *Outlaws*). Shit from a distance, painful up-close.

#### Thompson's machine-gun

For rapid-fire conversation-stopping.

#### Dynamite bundles

Just like those bangers you smuggled back on that school trip to Calais years ago, but considerably larger and deadlier. Use the 'Alternative Fire' key to stop 'em exploding on impact.



### CONTROLS:

<b>Spacebar</b>	Use items or open doors	<b>PG DN</b>	Look down
<b>TAB</b>	Toggle automap	<b>HOME</b>	Aim up
<b>F</b>	Toggle map follow mode	<b>END</b>	Aim down
<b>SHIFT</b>	Run	<b>Backspace</b>	Turn around
<b>SPACE</b>	Auto run	<b>[ or ]</b>	Cycle through inventory items
<b>ALT</b>	Strafe	<b>ENTER</b>	Use selected inventory item
<b>[</b>	Strafe left	<b>C</b>	Use Beast Vision*
<b>]</b>	Strafe right	<b>B</b>	Use crystal ball*
<b>CONTROL</b>	Fire the selected weapon's primary fire	<b>G</b>	Use guns akimbo*
<b>X</b>	Fire the selected weapon's alternate fire	<b>J</b>	Use jump boots*
<b>A</b>	Jump	<b>V</b>	Use vaseline*
<b>Z</b>	Crouch	<b>M</b>	Use doctor's bag*
<b>PG UP</b>	Look up	<b>P</b>	Use proximity bomb*
		<b>R</b>	Use remote detonator*

\* Assumes that you have this item in your inventory

### WE LIKE TO, HUH, BREAK STUFF

You can smash loads of stuff up in *Blood*; most of the scenery can be damaged in some way. Which set me to thinking: how about a vandalism simulator? Think about it, it'd be great. You patrol leafy suburbs and council estates, kicking in phone boxes, lobbing bricks through windows, spraying graffiti and generally acting the bastard. There wouldn't be any combat; you'd just have to try and scarper whenever someone started chasing you. Cool, eh?



## DARKLIGHT CONFLICT ELECTRONIC ARTS (DOS)

**T**HINK OF A SWEARWORD. NOW DOUBLE IT. Now imagine shouting it at the top of your voice. Because that's what you'll be doing when you get a look at *Darklight Conflict* in action. It looks downright amazing. You'll be astounded by the swirly visual effects, lens flares, spangly explosions

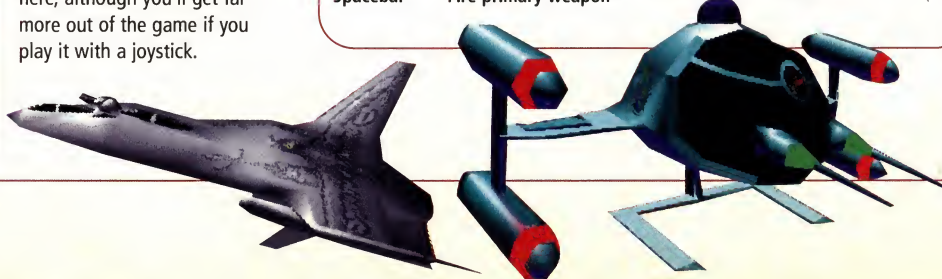


and split-second twinkles.

If you've ever played *Elite* you'll feel right at home. The radar system is easy to work out — just be sure to keep an eye on the swirling yellow arrow at the left-hand side of the screen. It's telling you where the bad guys are. We've listed the keys here, although you'll get far more out of the game if you play it with a joystick.

### CONTROLS:

<b>↓</b>	Climb	<b>ALT</b>	Fire secondary weapon
<b>↑</b>	Dive	<b>1 - 9</b>	Speed
<b>←</b>	Left	<b>0</b>	Speed (none)
<b>→</b>	Right	<b>[</b>	Reverse
<b>ALT ←</b>	Bank left	<b>ALT ]</b>	Afterburner
<b>ALT →</b>	Bank right	<b>Spacebar</b>	Shield (press and hold down)
<b>Spacebar</b>	Fire primary weapon	<b>TAB</b>	Scanner range toggle
		<b>P</b>	Pause





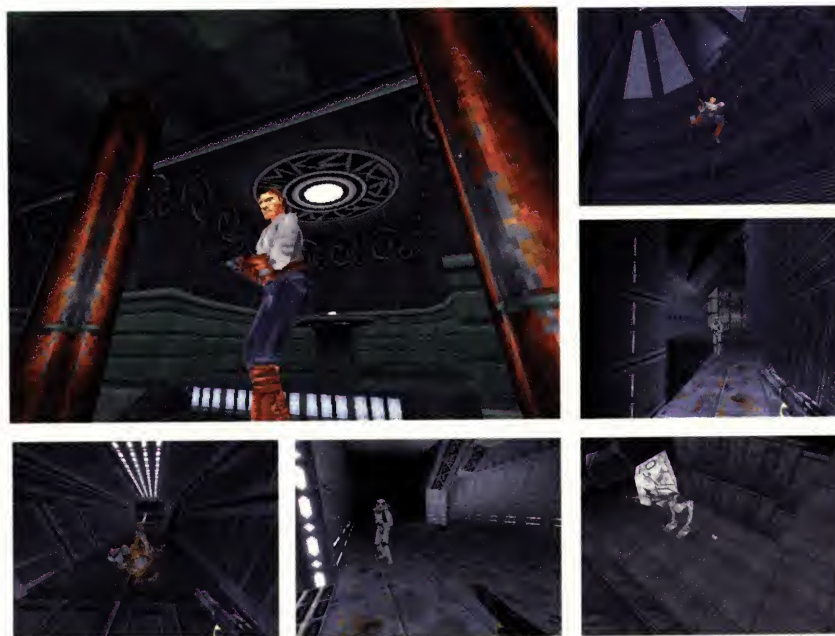


## JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES 2 INTERACTIVE PREVIEW

**A**S A SPECIAL TREAT and as a follow-up to last month's EXCLUSIVE in-depth preview we've compiled a unique 'interactive' behind the scenes look at what is undoubtedly going to be the hottest release of the year – *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2* from LucasArts.

Using the simple to use menu system you can click your way through our collection of EXCLUSIVE shots and work in progress animations and get a real insight into how *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2* is shaping up.

You can also check out shots of *Lands Of Lore 2* from Westwood, *Siege* from Telstar, *Atomic Bomberman* from Interplay as well as *Quake Rally* and *Quake Chess*.



Coming on  
Windows®95 & PlayStation™



*Bike as seen in the game.*

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# TERRIS © DOUG GOLDNR AND PAUL BARNETT

**W**ELL, THIS MONTH WE HAVE NOT ONE BUT TWO SHINY ROUND THINGS for your delectation and amusement. And they're both rather fab! This month's second bonus CD is *Terris*, the anally addictive on-line role-playing game from America On Line. In a wicked attempt to get you completely hooked on *Terris*, they're giving away 50 hours free on-line time to all PC Zone readers. Now that can't be bad, can it?

## Installing Terris

There are a few things you need to install *Terris*. Firstly, the CD (which always comes in handy), a modem, and a phonenumber. Pop the CD in the drawer, run Windows and go to the relevant drive in Explorer (or File Manager if you're running Windows 3.x). Then double-click on the SETUP.EXE file and follow the on-screen instructions.

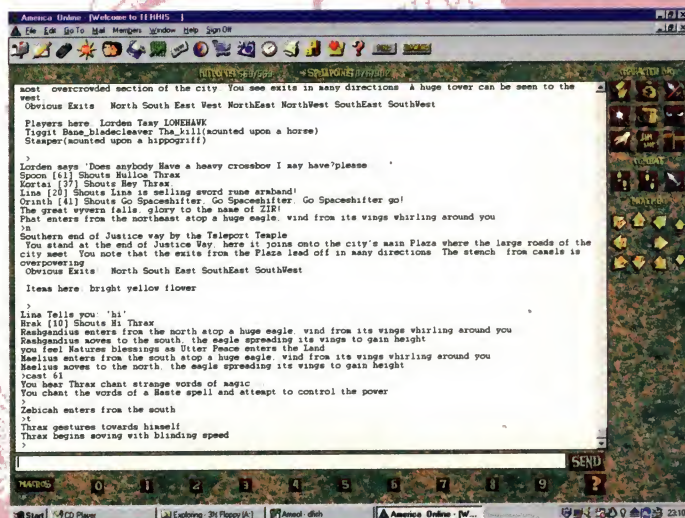
Once you've created your AOL account, you'll need to go to the *Terris* area. Once you're in AOL hit the "Keyword" button on the AOL menu bar and enter "Keyword Terris". This will take you to the gateway. Now you'll need to download the *Terris* artwork, which usually takes about four minutes. When you've done this you're ready to spend the next 49 hours and 56 minutes playing *Terris* for free!

## The game

First things first. Before going into the game you'll need to create a character to play with. There's a whole range of classes, from blood-crazed fighters to spell-casting mages – even hippie druids! Try to get a character that kind of represents what you want to do in the game – there's not much point being a fighter if you want to cast spells, etc...

Okay, once you've created a character you'll be taken to one of the big cities in *Terris*. On average there are over 400 players from both the UK and the US on at any one time. All these players are other people playing at the same time as you, so there's always someone to ask if you get stuck.

The game itself is almost entirely text-based. Basically, it's a modern day version



of the University MUDs that used to be around when computers first crept into Undergrad courses. The challenge of the game is simple: you need to solve puzzles and riddles, gain experience to go up levels and battle your way through mythical creatures.

Your first task is a simple one. You must find an object located nearby, and bring it to solve the first puzzle. This will give you a simple guide as to moving around, which is basically via points of the compass – type SE to go South East, N for North and so on.

There will definitely come a point when you'll get into a fight. Initially the only opponent you'll be capable of fighting is an overgrown rat, but as you gain experience you'll be able to take on giants, dragons and even Death himself! Combat is based on a system very similar to the RPG dice games known as *D&D*. You and your opponent each have a set number of hit points (HPs) which diminish every time you take a hit from a weapon or spell. When your HPs reach zero you're dead, so don't go wading into tricky situations willy-nilly or you won't 'live' very long. In addition to HPs your characters will also have spell points (SPs). These resource points are required every time you cast a spell, so use them wisely. Run out of magic juice and it's down to good old-fashioned combat, so be prepared.

You can improve both your ability to fight (by spending build points) and the weapon you use (you usually start with a small sword or dagger but you can buy bigger and better swords, even Excaliber!) and this in turn will affect how much damage you can inflict on an opponent.

Although it doesn't exactly thrill in terms of visuals, *Terris* is extremely addictive once you get into it. After just a few hours on-line, we promise that you'll be completely addicted as you spend hours desperately trying to build up your character. The fact that there are so many other 'real' people in the game means that unlike so many other RPGs it can be seriously unpredictable and, at the same time, totally absorbing. Invasions can occur, earthquakes can happen, and of course there are also Guild matters to attend to (Guilds are households of players where you can learn unique skills).

Since *Terris* went 'officially' on-line in October last year, it's rapidly become Europe's most popular on-line multi-player RPG, and when we reviewed it last year we gave it a whopping 88 per cent. Thanks to the fact that it's continually being improved means that it's still in our top ten list of best RPGs! It's also got a lot bigger and faster and is now even more addictive than before. Take our advice and register now, otherwise you'll never know what you've been missing!

## PROBLEMS?

If you experience any difficulties installing and using the software on the *Terris*/AOL CD or would just like more information on *Terris* or America On-Line please phone the following number: 0800 279 7444.


NB PC Zone/AOL cannot accept any responsibility for any loss of data or damage caused through installing or using the software on this CD.





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# OUTLAWS

LUCASARTS/VIE (WIN 95 ONLY)



● Ooh, look at that. That's how many bullets you've got in your gun. When you run out (which you will, very quickly), just right-click to reload.

● This here number represents how many bullets you've got left in your pockets (as opposed to loaded in yer gun). When this is down to zero, you're in mighty big trouble.

● See that red bar? That's your 'Knackered-o-meter'. When you're

really tired you won't be able to run very fast or jump very high.

● This shows which inventory item you're currently holding in your foul, grubby hand. Hit 'Return' to use it, or 'D' to drop the bastard thing.

● This rack of hearts represents your current physical well-being. If it's running low, be on the lookout for water canteens (which look a bit like cherry pies).

## CONTROLS:

### MOVEMENT



Move yourself around, like the slinky snake-hipped bounty hunter you are

SHIFT

Spacebar

Afterburners

Nudge (used when opening doors etc)

X

Jump

C

Crouch (very handy, this)

LOCK

Move slow

or ALT ←

Strafe left

or ALT →

Strafe right

In the full version of the game you'll gain access to a variety of additional weapons, including a knife, sawn-off and double-barrel shotguns and a Gatling gun.

### HOW TO USE A WEAPON

CONTROL

Fire primary

Z

Secondary weapon action

R

Reload

### OTHER KEY FUNCTIONS

↑ ↓

Scroll through inventory

ENTER

Select/use item

TAB

Active map

L

Lamp

O

Disarm

+ -

Change screen size

G

Drop item

PG UP or F1

Look up

PG DN or F2

Look down

END

Look back

F

Free look

### WEAPONS

As you progress through the game you'll encounter a variety of different weapons (Limited in the Demo). To select a weapon, press one of the number keys on your keyboard.

1

Fist

2

Pistol

3

Rifle/Toggle scope

4

Single-barrel shotgun

**C**ONSIDERING THE POPULARITY OF BOTH A) WESTERNS AND B) Doom-style shoot 'em ups, it's surprising we haven't seen a marriage of the two before now. Welcome to the wild and woolly world of *Outlaws*, the rootin' tootin' shootin' bounty hunter 'em up from LucasArts. Your role is that of Marshall James Anderson, a retired lawman out to avenge his wife's murder.

It may look a bit on the bland side to start with, but hang on in there because there's a cracking game lurking under the surface. It's more 'realistic' than most first-person blasters, in that weapons need to be manually reloaded, hitting the bad guys requires a fair degree of accuracy and it takes very little bullet-in-head action to kill you. The accent is firmly on sneaking around, ducking for cover, and generally acting like a cunning bastard, instead of a brainless gung-ho maniac. You've got one level to clean up in this demo – the full game features many more – and a cracking multi-player option too.

## READ THIS, IT'S IMPORTANT

For some reason, the default options are set up in a way which some of you might think is a bit odd. Make sure you do the following before you even think of playing the game:

- \* Turn on the 'visible crosshairs'
- \* Switch on 'pitch return'
- \* Play with the mouse and keyboard simultaneously

## CD ZONE EXTRA

**T**HERE ARE OVER 30 PLAYABLE demos on this month's CD including *Comanche 3* from NovaLogic, *Quake Rally* and *NBA Jam Extreme* from Acclaim. We haven't got room to explain how to play them all, so use the browser to check 'em out. Most have README.TXT files which tell you what the controls are, and many have instructions which can be accessed via the in-game menu.

There's also heaps of patches, essential programs and Internet

utilities as well as our all-new tips database which is packed full of walkthroughs and hints for hundreds of games. To access this mine of invaluable info click on the 'PATCHES' folder on the CD and then double-click on the 'SOLUTIONS' folder. Most of the files can be accessed through Microsoft Word by double-clicking on the game title, although you'll need to unzip some of them onto your hard drive before you can read them (WINZIP can be found on this month's CD in the 'Essentials' directory).



## HD ZONE

### Quiver (ESD) DOS

**T**HIS MONTH'S FLOPPY DEMO is yet another first-person shoot 'em up, but this one runs extremely quickly and is definitely worth a look. To install the game insert the floppy into floppy drive, click on the PCZONE.EXE file and follow the on-screen instructions. *Quiver* is also on this month's CD and can be accessed via the browser in the usual manner.



### CONTROLS:



Movement

ESC

Access main menu

PG UP

Look up

PG DN

Look down

HOME

Centre view

TAB F9

Auto map

F1

Help

F2

Save game

F3

Load game

F4

Sound/music volume control

F11

Gamma

CTRL ENTER

Fire

ALT

Strafe (with direction keys)

SHIFT

Run (with direction keys)

END INS

Jump

Spacebar

Open doors/trigger switches



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PC CD-ROM

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# BULLETIN

## Tomb Raider update

To those of you who bought *Tomb Raider* and played it through from start to finish, news of a new expansion pack, extending

DATA PAD

What's new! What it looks like! When it's out!



## Falcon 'ell!

Quiet since the release of their 1996 smash hit *Hind*, Digital Integration have at last broken their silence with the announcement of their latest project, *F-16 Fighting Falcon*.

With over 100 missions divided over three campaign settings through Korea, Israel and Cyprus, *F-16 Fighting Falcon* should once again assert the fact that Digital Integration create some of the best flight sims in the world. Once again, DI's designers have set out to develop the most realistic game possible, although novices need not be put off because there'll be an arcade mode option to accommodate them.

*F-16 Fighting Falcon* will feature every trick from the flight sim design bible, such as a fluid virtual cockpit, the latest in hi-tech weaponry, intelligent wingmen and network play for up to 16 pilots, as well as sporting an updated version of

DI's clean-looking 3D engine.

Everything being equal, we should expect to see a finished version in the autumn. Refer to <http://www.digint.co.uk> for all available updates. Z



## The Ion Storm breaks

The most talked about people in the whole wide world bring news of their brand new line-up.



*Daikatana*, *Anachronox* and *Stranded* have been named as the

first titles in the range of Ion Storm developed games, out through EIDOS Interactive in the not too distant future.

Led by highly acclaimed uberfraggermeister programming dudes John Romero (*Doom*, *Quake*), Tom Hall (*Doom*, *Prey*) and Todd Porter (ex-7th Level), news of Ion Storm's first releases comes hot on the heels of much speculation, and it's already clear that the PC gaming community is wringing its collective hands in anticipation.

Presently there are 15 people working on

*Daikatana* (the name of a type of Samurai sword apparently), which includes Romero, who is personally overseeing the whole project. Both EIDOS and Ion Storm insist that *Daikatana's* pre-Christmas release date is "totally realistic", and there's even a possibility that it may be released before *Quake 2* and *Unreal*.

*Daikatana* is to use a new version of the *Quake* engine,

with advanced 3D card support, but will apparently look and feel markedly different to the mighty *Q*. *Daikatana* has been dubbed 'a time-travelling action adventure using close and long-ranged weapons with a subtle beat 'em up feel'. Word that there are role-playing elements in the game may have raised an eyebrow or two, though Romero himself promises *Daikatana's* action bias to be the name of the game from where he stands.

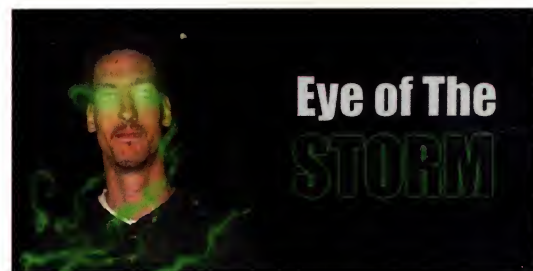
Tom Hall, ex-iD Software and 3D Realms, is working on *Anachronox* – a humorous science fiction role-playing game that he himself describes as "a turbulent story with a roller coaster of emotion". The game will see players searching for weapons and tools through different planets and dimensions to progress

through a puzzle-based environment, and is expected to be completed late in 1998.

Finally there's Todd Porter, former 3D graphics guru at 7th Level, who's heading the creation of *Stranded* – a real-time strategy game with a promised, but as yet unseen, new slant on the genre to distinguish itself from the others. *Stranded* will be out in October '98.

Ion Storm have also just taken residence of a new multi-zillion dollar office suite on the top two floors of the second largest skyscraper in the whole of downtown Dallas – so it looks like they won't have far to move once they've made their fortune on these three titles.

Ion Storm have a really good Web page at <http://www.ionstorm.com>, if you want to find out more about them. Z



## WarCraft revisited

Blizzard Entertainment have announced a new addition to their acclaimed *WarCraft* range which looks set to take the series in a whole new direction.

With over 60 locations, linked together with an array of animated cut sequences, plus over 70 animated characters, *WarCraft Adventures: Lord Of The Clans* brings the *WarCraft* setting into the realms of full-blown adventuring.

"This adventure game tells an important chapter in our overall version of the *Warcraft* story. For the first time, players will interact with the Orcish Horde, and learn about their history and motivations. The game adds to the depth of the *WarCraft* universe and provides the back story for future titles," commented Blizzard's Allen Adham.

A Windows 95 version of *Lord Of The Clans* is currently scheduled for a late summer release. Check out <http://www.blizzard.com> for further details. Z







the Lara Croft story by two episodes, will be most welcome indeed. *Tomb Raider v1.1* will pick up the action from where the original tale left off, and it's very much intended that the

going will not get any easier, as *v1.1* is intended for experts only. *Tomb Raider* addicts will get a chance to update their existing software to *v1.1* at the exceedingly good price of

£9.99 from the beginning of June. Developers Core Design promise that there'll be a completely new game starring everyone's favourite busy heroine come the end of the year.



## Apache sim from EIDOS



Team Apache draws from Simis' experience of creating helicopter simulations, such as the classic *KA-50 Hokum*, or their current work in progress *Missing In Action* (due from GT Interactive at the end of the year), and promises to push the genre



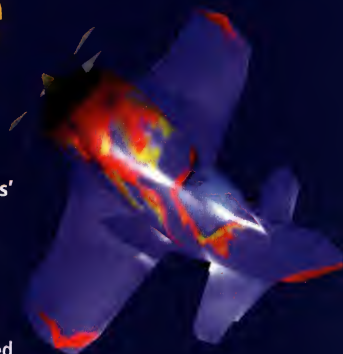
to new and unexplored areas.

At the heart of *Team Apache* lies a dynamic real-time campaign setting which favours the style and procedure of team combat, even down to managing the maintenance crew and morale and abilities of the team as a whole. Theatres in the Saudi Arabian desert, the rain forests of Columbia and the temperate climes of Latvia will provide the backdrop for a multitude of explosive missions.

*Team Apache* will use the same 3D system as *Terracide*, and includes comprehensive 3D accelerator support in order to maintain the high frame rate of its stunning visuals.

If you want more news, NOW, you'll find it at <http://www.eidosinteractive.com>. **Z**

## They're plane crazy



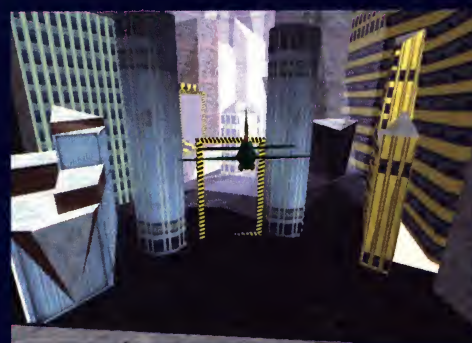
Glasgow-based Inner Workings' *Plane Crazy* will be the first in a line of PC-developed titles to debut as a full-blown arcade machine in an initiative to encourage the adoption by the coin-op industry of high-powered PCs running the Microsoft Windows 95 operating system.

*Plane Crazy* is a super-fast 3D flying racing game, in some ways similar to Nintendo's classic *Pilotwings*, that utilises a proprietary 3D engine (developed by Inner Workings' specialist games group Team Fearsome) combining Microsoft Direct3D technology and the latest in 3D acceleration to stunning effect.

A PC version, essentially the same as the arcade original, will take advantage of a number of different graphic accelerator cards, and will also feature an eight-player link-up option.

Inner Workings have yet to announce a publisher for the PC version of *Plane Crazy*, so there's no news of a release date as yet. Arcade versions usually roll out before Christmas but we hope to have more news for you in the next issue of *PC Zone*.

For more information go inside Inner Workings at <http://www.innerworkings.co.uk>. **Z**



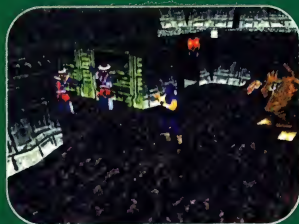
## Ninja to follow Tomb Raider



Core Design have fed details of their new Saturn/PlayStation action adventure *Ninja* to the console press, but as yet there are still no details of the PC version.

Although *Ninja* makes use of Core's magnificent *Tomb Raider* engine, the company insist that *Ninja* is in no way a sequel to Lara Croft's first outing and will be completely action-packed with enemies attacking left, right and centre. Spread over ten varied levels, *Ninja's* weapon-based beat 'em up style of gameplay will lead the player through various scenarios set in impressive indoor and outdoor locations.

A PC version must certainly be on the cards (especially if the console versions do well at Christmas), so as soon as we find out when that'll be, rest assured you'll be the first to hear about it. **Z**



## Reach out and crush someone

Having seen screenshots earlier this month, it looks as if Sierra are really pulling out all the stops on their new *Earthsiege* instalment. *Earthsiege 3* will be the first Dynamix release to make full use of their revolutionary new 3D technology, featuring texture-mapped Gouraud-shaded terrain and vehicles with an engine that Sierra claim will have "unprecedented visible sight distance". Motion capture, for the animation of anthropomorphic vehicles, is being applied to the fantastic polygon graphics, all of which will benefit greatly from full 3D accelerator card support (including native support of the Rendition and 3Dfx chipsets).

Playing as either Corporate, Cybrid or Rebel your squad of hulking HERCs will have over 45 missions to blast through, and over 50 different weapons to do it with. There'll also be expanded tactical battle options including satellite surveillance, mobile artillery and air strikes.

Have a look at <http://www.sierra.com> if you want to know more. **Z**

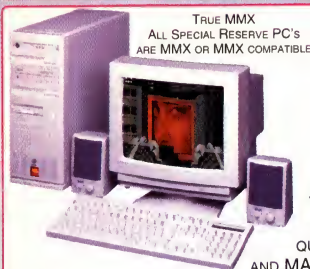




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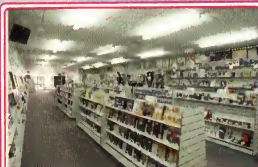
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ZZAP.net	PENTIUM P133	16 MB	£978.71	1149.99	114.99	36.68	1435.47
ZZAP.net	PENTIUM P166 MMX	16 MB	1148.93	1349.99	134.99	43.06	1685.15
ZZAP.net	PENTIUM P200 MMX	16 MB	1319.14	1549.99	154.99	49.44	1934.83
FOXX.net	PENTIUM P133	24 MB	1148.93	1349.99	134.99	43.06	1685.15
FOXX.net	PENTIUM P166 MMX	24 MB	1319.14	1549.99	154.99	49.44	1934.83
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"The one that really stood out from the crowd was the Special Reserve MAXX"

"I don't believe it! - a mere £1700 - the BIZZ is damn good value for money"



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MAXX, AS THE NAME SUGGESTS, IS A FLAGSHIP AMONG COMPUTERS. MASSIVE HARD DRIVE, FASTEST GRAPHICS, BEST SOUND, LATEST SOFTWARE, TOP GAMES: IT ALL ADDS UP TO A TECHNOLOGICAL DREAM MACHINE. TO CATER FOR BUSINESS OR SECOND-TIME BUYERS WE ALSO OFFER A BIZZ VERSION WITH SOFTWARE AND MODEM DELETED

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- 4300 MB Quantum Cyclone quality Mode 4 hard drive
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- MATROX MYSTIQUE 3D MGA PnP wickedly fast 3D Windows and Graphics accelerator. Top rated graphics card. Massive 4 MB SGRAM high speed video memory to cope with the highest resolutions
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- INTEL PENTIUM MMX CPU with silent fan. All BIZZ and MAXX PC's are true MMX
- ADI PROVISTA 14" 0.28 dot pitch SVGA colour monitor with tilt & swivel stand and 2 year ADI on-site warranty. Optional 15" or 17" models (please see OPTIONS)
- 32 MB FAST EDO RAM expandable to 512 MB (6 slots)
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- ALL SOFTWARE PRE-INSTALLED AND ON CD except demo's
- WINDOWS 95 RELEASE 2 Microsoft's latest system software
- CREATIVE LABS SOUND SOFTWARE SUITE
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FASTER CD ROM  
BETTER MONITOR  
IMPROVED SOFTWARE

### Software **MAXX** Pack NOT INCLUDED IN BIZZ PC

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- SEVEN MICROSOFT CD's. Encarta 96 best-selling Encyclopedia, Autoroute Express (A.K.A. Automap), Microsoft Wine Guide to 6000 wines, Explorapedia spectacular Encyclopedia for kids, Creative Writer and Fine Artist brilliant programs for young writers or budding designers, and Microsoft Golf Multimedia
- COMMAND AND CONQUER
- STAR TREK TNG - A FINAL UNITY
- SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER
- VIDEO AND SOUND SUITES

### Special Reserve **BIG 30** Games Bundle NOT INCLUDED IN BIZZ PC

- 26 GAMES: Settlers 2, Archimedean Dynasty, Transport Tycoon Deluxe, Railroad Tycoon Deluxe, UFO Enemy Unknown, Destruction Derby, Lemmings Paintball, Gods, Magic Pockets, Speedball 2, Xenon 2, Cadaver, Lotus 3, Zool 2, Premier Manager 2, Space Crusade, Gunship, Jack Nicklaus Golf, Mig 29, Silent Service 2, Team Yankee, Championship Manager '93, F19 Stealth Fighter, Ishar, Campaign and Grand Prix Masters
- QUAKE, DUKE NUKEM 3D, F1 GP2, SWIV 3D, NASCAR & TOMB RAIDER playable episodes

### Additional **MAXX.net** PC features

- U.S. ROBOTICS 33.6 SPORTSTER VOICE/FAX/MODEM upgradeable to faster speeds when available. With speakerphone, answerphone, fax broadcasting, phone book, remote access, voicemail, e-mail and much more. 5 year U.S. Robotics warranty
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PLEASE ALSO SEE INTERNET ADVICE AND ABOUT MMX IN THE SPECIAL RESERVE MAGAZINE.

### ★★★★★ **WHAT THE PRESS SAY**

PC HOME 95% TOP RATING EVER "The Special Reserve PC is an outstanding package. It worked perfectly from its first power up and was nicely set up with all the software installed and ready to run... Two similar specification PC's can actually be as different as chalk and cheese. The one that really stood out from the crowd was the Special Reserve PC, it really is a stunning package."

PC PLUS - SECOND REPORT OF LONG TERM TEST (MARCH '97) "Four months on and still smiling... Taking into account the superb software bundle I'd be happy if I'd paid for it. But I was thinking of buying a new PC right now I'd hold off to see how the prices of MMX machines look"

COMPUTER LIFE "I don't believe it! A mere £1700 (+VAT). The Bizz is damn good value for money... the hard drive is an ultra-fast Quantum... you won't find significantly better quality components anywhere... a stonking spec for the price"

PC ADVISOR "Sizzling PC if you are looking to upgrade or want the best PC for the office... designed to deliver maximum power and performance... games and multimedia users should take a look because this machine has a lot to offer"

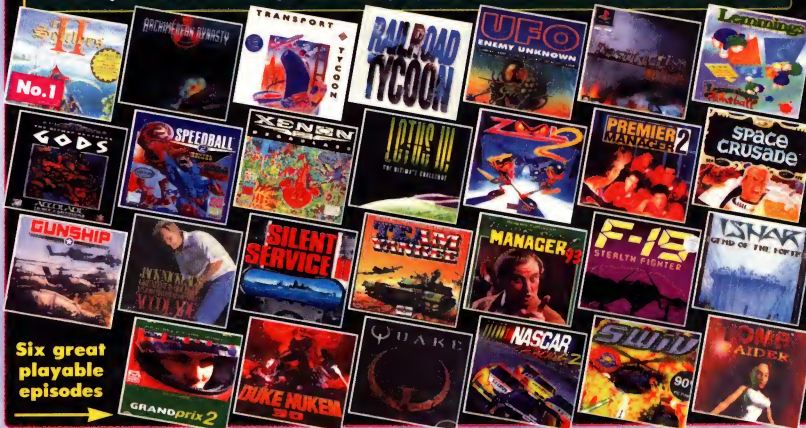
	INTEL PENTIUM	EDO	EX VAT	INC VAT	10%	36 MONTHLY	TOTAL
	MHz CPU SPEED	RAM	PRICE	PRICE	DEPOSIT	PAYMENTS OF	PAYABLE
BIZZ	P166 MMX	32 MB	1319.14	1549.99	154.99	49.44	1934.83
BIZZ	P200 MMX	32 MB	1489.35	1749.99	174.99	55.82	2184.51
MAXX	P166 MMX	32 MB	1446.80	1699.99	169.99	54.22	2121.91
MAXX	P200 MMX	32 MB	1617.01	1899.99	189.99	60.60	2371.59
MAXX.net	P166 MMX	32 MB	1531.91	1799.99	179.99	57.41	2246.75
MAXX.net	P200 MMX	32 MB	1702.12	1999.99	199.99	63.79	2496.43

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"The games bundle - always one of the things that makes Special Reserve special" (PC Gamer)

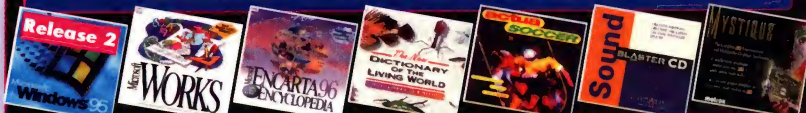
## Special Reserve **BIG 30** Games Bundle included with all Special Reserve PC's except BIZZ

Actually consists of 26 full games and 6 playable episodes - not all games are shown



Six great  
playable  
episodes

### Additional software in **ZZAP** PC



### Additional software in **FOXX** PC



### Additional software in **MAXX** PC



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NETWORK CARD OR HEAD TO HEAD KIT FOR TWO PC'S	PLEASE ASK

All prices include VAT and fitting where applicable. If you require an item that is not listed please call 01279 600204.

Inevitably some products listed may not yet be available. Please phone to check availability. Prices may change without prior notification. Sent to press 13.04.97 Errors & Omissions Excluded. Inter-Mediate Ltd, The Maltings, Sawbridgeworth, Herts.



# Special Reserve

Live @ <http://special.reserve.co.uk>

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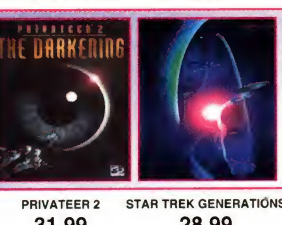
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# Actua's coming home

A special *Club* edition of Gremlin Interactive's *Actua Soccer*, based around the English Premier League, will be hitting the shops by

the time you read this. Any one of the 20 current Premier League sides can be steered on a course through an exciting world of top-flight footy, or read up on in a comprehensive football database compiled by Angus Loughram,

of Fantasy Football League Statto fame.

*Actua Club Edition* is to wrap up all these options and statistics in a brand new package, which will incorporate a redesigned front-end and 'sticker book' style player photos.



DATA PRO

## Screamin' what?!



The unlikely title of *Screamin' Demons Over Europe* has been chosen by Activision as the name of Parsoft's follow-up to their smash hit *A-10 Cuba*. Formerly called *Dogfight* (gaining mention last issue), *Screamin' Demons Over Europe* will spotlight the intense, aerial close combat of World War Two, with a

ground-breaking simulator engine based on the most accurate inertia, gravity and force calculations to date – and from what we've seen so far, we're inclined to agree with them. In terms of graphics it also looks like being one of the best games of its type – mainly due to efficient polygon usage, creamy texturing and clever programming tricks.

Three scenarios (English Channel, Rhineland and North Africa) and nine fighters (from the Lockheed P-38 Lightning to the Messerschmidt ME-262)

are on the cards for the Windows 95 version, which is due out during the autumn.

A well-stocked Activision Website can be found at

<http://www.activision.com>.



It looks as though finding a cab won't be a problem in *Heist*, but staying alive will.



## It's a Heist

Sean Cooper, one of the men behind the massive success of key Bullfrog titles *Syndicate Wars* and *Magic Carpet* has defected to Virgin Interactive.

We went to see Sean at Virgin and were given a sneak peek of *Heist*, a potential *Syndicate Wars*-beater currently in the works. The premise of the game is morally sound: 'sound out' a couple of banks, get yourself a getaway driver, and storm in to nick all the loot (well, it's morally sound as far as we're concerned anyway). Sean has shied away from the



'true 3D' environment used in *Syndicate Wars* in favour of a more simplistic 2D/3D environment which will allow for a friendlier user interface. The missions promise to be extremely varied with strategic planning being as vital to your success as the ability to mow down innocent civilians. We'll bring you more news on this hot project next issue.

## Cryo go crazy

Classy French developers Cryo Interactive have brazenly announced no fewer than six new titles for 1997.



Thankfully, *Riverworld's* got nothing at all to do with Hammy Hamster.

sense, in which you are a god who faces the daunting task of creating and managing entire universes while competing against other human and computer players.

*The Third Millennium*, just for a change, is another top-down *Civilization* game, this time set on Earth in the year 2500. The game uses real world predictions and social and environmental projects to create a realistic



Let's hope that *Atlantis* will play as good as it looks, unlike *Myst*.



picture of the planet 500 years from now. Ever since Cryo received the financial backing of Louis Vuitton – Moët Hennessy (the company behind poncey fashion houses such as Givenchy, Chanel and Christian Dior), they've gone development crazy, with the following titles all looking to be out before the end of the year:

*Atlantis: The Lost Tales* is a *Myst*-style adventure featuring a unique 360 degree first-person viewpoint. While battling to save the ancient civilisation from destruction the player will be able to view his surroundings from virtually any angle.

*Riverworld* is a sort of cross between top-down *Civilization* games and first-person classics such as *Lords Of Midnight*. The player's role is to oversee the development of a far-off planet while implementing events and characters from human history.

*Intervention* is another strategy game, this time in the traditional

picture of the planet 500 years from now. Finally, *Dreams* is a three-dimensional action game in which you battle with magic and science, while *Ubik*, based on the novel by Philip K Dick, is an adventure set in the year 2019, in a world ruled by mega-corporations and industrial espionage.

More information on all titles can be obtained from Cryo's Website on [www.cryo-interactive.fr](http://www.cryo-interactive.fr).



Let's hope that *Dreams* won't fall foul of style over content – it looks worryingly good.



(Top) *Ubik* looks quite tasty, as does *Third Millennium* (bottom).



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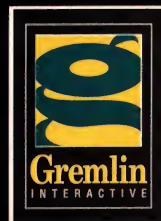
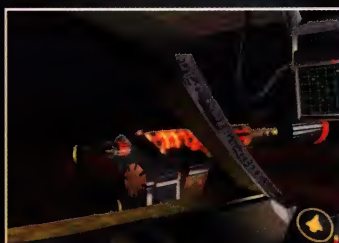
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### Can you feel the force?

CH Products are launching the first ever PC force feedback joystick at the end of May. The Force FX offers jolt, vector force, vibration,

spring, button reflex and buffeting effects to provide maximum feedback from all supported software, including Mission Studio's *Jetfighter III* and Parallax Software's *Descent 2*. With the help of a special software

development kit programmers can apparently have the joystick running in no time, which should help introduce a standard for this kind of device. A price has yet to be quoted, so watch this space for updates or a full review.



DATA PAD

# Step aside Indy



After the surprising international success of *Broken Sword*, the boys at Revolution Software have announced their highly anticipated follow-up.

Once again the floppy-haired George Stobbard finds himself caught up in murder, mystery, mayhem and Mayans as he searches Europe for the sacred shields of Quetzacoatl and staves off the end of civilisation as we know it in *Broken Sword II - The Smoking Mirror*.



As with the first game, Revolution are pushing the graphical boat out big-time. This time round they're also addressing many of the criticisms thrown at the original *Broken Sword* - too much talking, not enough action, not enough for the player to do, not challenging enough - by upping the number of hotspots on the screen and giving more control to the player.



*The Smoking Mirror* is tentatively scheduled for release in the third quarter of the year, and if you think the name's odd, count yourself lucky. Apparently it was originally going to be called 'George Stobbard And The Amazon Adventure'. Lucky escape there, folks. **Z**

## 7th Level police the skies



Continuing their fascination with Saturday morning cartoon shows, 7th Level have announced a brand new action helicopter sim that, while not actually based on one, seems to positively wallow in the mass-produced, easily marketable, soulless cartoon shows that infest our children's televisual lives (with the exception of *Samurai Pizza Cats*, which was great). *Helicops* is the story of an elite helicopter police unit in the near future, tasked with patrolling the skies of NeoTokyo and dedicated



to foiling the nefarious schemes of the evil Maxwell Giger, underworld crimelord. You can almost smell the 'action figures', can't you? **Z**

## Incarceration for everyone

Sierra's forthcoming *Captives* promises a new and interesting approach to the now ludicrously popular real-time strategy genre by placing all the emphasis on saving rather than taking lives, so it could be in for some stick from the hardcore C&C crowd.

Currently scheduled for a May release, *Captives* will assume a 3D isometric viewpoint over 25 missions, all played against a strict time limit. There'll be unique tactical gameplay elements to learn and adopt, such as putting captured enemy soldiers to work on your own installations (although we're not quite sure if that contravenes the rules laid down by the Geneva Convention). **Z**



# You read it here first

**Last minute rocket-fuelled mumbblings** as we go to press... EA gave us a quick demo of their new bowling sim *Ten Pin Alley* recently, but it seemed to make little impression with the battle-hardened troops in the PC Zone office. As travesties go, it could be EA's best effort to date. We'll reserve final judgement for the review version next month.

And there's more... Those increasingly strange people at 21st Century have announced yet another drastically niche addition to their summer catalogue in the shape of *International Aviation Manager*, which they must hope will appeal to more than just air traffic control students.

To round off, a very quick mention of Sky

TV's *Silicon Valley Week*, which will begin on Monday 17 May and will broadcast from 6pm 'til 8pm on The Computer Channel. With behind the scenes footage and in-depth interviews from within the heart of America's computer industry, *Silicon Valley Week* could turn out to be quite interesting for us computer types. **Z**

## Sierra in for a bumpy ride

Work on *SODA Off-Road Racing*, loosely modelled after the Short Course Off-Road Drivers Association World Series and covered heavily on the garish American sports channel ESPN, is currently well under way at Papyrus - on target for a mid-summer roll-out from Sierra.

*SODA Off-Road* will give the player a choice of three race vehicles (four-wheel drive trucks, two-wheel drive trucks and two-wheel drive buggies), and 50 levels of difficulty to mess around with. There will even be a user-friendly track designer allowing easy construction of custom-built tracks which are easily tradeable due to their small file size. Sierra hope that this will encourage the proliferation of a healthy *SODA* racing community within

PC racing circles.

You can find out more about *SODA Off-Road Racing* at <http://www.sierra.com>. **Z**





# ALL THE HITS



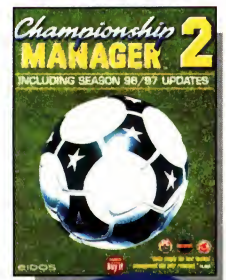
## AND MORE.....

It must be Christmas all over again! Eidos Interactive are offering an unbeatable deal on five chart topping, award winning titles. Tomb Raider, Championship

Manager 2, Jetfighter III, Links LS and Duke Nukem all scoring over 90%. Now you can buy any of these hit titles and get a great gift, absolutely free. \*



**DUKE NUKEM 3D**  
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EXTRA LEVELS



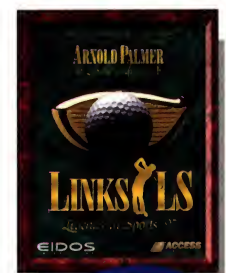
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**FREE**  
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\*While stocks last

**EIDOS**  
INTERACTIVE



## Be Tiger Woods! Sort of... (part 1)

With the golf game genre currently being swamped by titles, Sierra have decided to play safe and enter the unclaimed world of Crazy Golf

DATA PRO

sims. 3-D Ultra MiniGolf is a wacky and zany (it says here) take on the game of golf, featuring nine classic holes (such as windmills, loops and moats) and nine Wacky™ holes including dinosaurs, jungle ruins and the moon.

Apparently it uses the real-world physics of mini-golf (an oft-neglected corner of the scientific world) and two types of putting control for novices and experts. 3-D Ultra MiniGolf is due for release any time now.



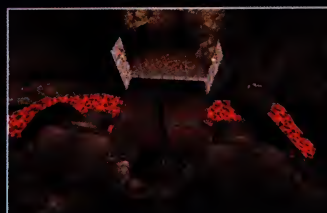
You reckon you're the best PC gamesplayer in the land? Then come and test your mettle in the 1997 Official PC Zone UK Games Championship. The event, being held over the summer months at a number of key Internet cafés across the land, will see registered combatants going head-to-head in a series of six different games challenges in a bid to reach our Krypton Factor of a final on 24 August 1997.

**BECOME A  
PC Gaming  
Champion  
AND WIN BIG  
PRIZES!**

### BIG PRIZES!

All regional winners will be treated to an all-expenses-paid trip to the final which will take place on **Sunday 24 August 1997** at Shoot 'n' Surf, London WC1. The winner on that particular day will walk off with a fantastic top of the range Compaq MMX Games PC (full details next month), and an enormous great grin on their face. Due to overwhelming demand our deadline for entries has now been pushed back to **30 June 1997**. So now you've got more time to get those forms in!

### THE GAMES CATEGORIES



**SHOOT 'EM UP**  
*Quake: The  
Scourge Of  
Armagon*



**FLIGHT SIM**  
*EF2000*



**SPORT**  
*Actua Soccer  
Club Edition*



**BOARD GAME**  
*Risk*



**RACING**  
*Network Q  
RAC Rally  
Championship*



**COMBAT  
STRATEGY**  
*C&C: Red Alert*

### PC ZONE UK GAMES CHAMPIONSHIP REGISTRATION FORM:

Please fill in this registration form, and send or take it to your chosen venue.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: ..... Tel: .....

FaX (if applicable): .....

E-mail (if applicable): .....

Alias: ..... Age: ..... Sex: .....

Occupation: ..... Favourite game: .....

Computer at home (circle one): None 486- Pentium+

Do you have Internet access at home (circle one): Yes No

Chosen venue: .....

Please tick here if you do not want to receive further information about other special offers from your chosen venue. ☐

Contact chosen venue for current charge rates. Contact **only** your chosen venue for information.

### THE VENUES

#### THE SOUTH EAST (AND FINAL)

Shoot 'n' Surf  
13 New Oxford Street  
London WC1A 1BA  
Web: <http://www.shootnsurf.co.uk>  
e-mail: [pczone@shootnsurf.co.uk](mailto:pczone@shootnsurf.co.uk)  
Tel: 0171 419 1183

#### THE SOUTH WEST

Internet Express  
1b Exeter Central Station  
Queen Street, Exeter EX4 3SB  
Web: <http://www.inexpress.co.uk>  
e-mail: [pczone@mail.inexpress.co.uk](mailto:pczone@mail.inexpress.co.uk)  
Tel: 01392 201544

#### THE MIDLANDS

Cyberpub  
5 Victoria Centre  
21 Lower Parliament Street  
Nottingham NG1 3DB  
e-mail: [ntm00001@cyberpub.adr.co.uk](mailto:ntm00001@cyberpub.adr.co.uk)  
Tel: 0115 947 5394

#### THE NORTH EAST

Punter's Cybercafe  
111 Arundal Street  
Sheffield S1 2NT  
Web: <http://www.punters.co.uk>  
e-mail: [pczone@punters.co.uk](mailto:pczone@punters.co.uk)  
Tel: 0114 276 2668

#### THE NORTH WEST

Cyberia  
12 Oxford Street  
Manchester M1 5AN  
Web: <http://www.easynet.co.uk/cybman/>  
e-mail: [pczone@easynet.co.uk](mailto:pczone@easynet.co.uk)  
Tel: 0161 950 2233

#### SCOTLAND

Reality-X  
54 Broughton Street  
Edinburgh EH1 3SA  
Web: <http://www.reality-x.co.uk>  
e-mail: [pczone@reality-x.co.uk](mailto:pczone@reality-x.co.uk)  
Tel: 0131 478 7099

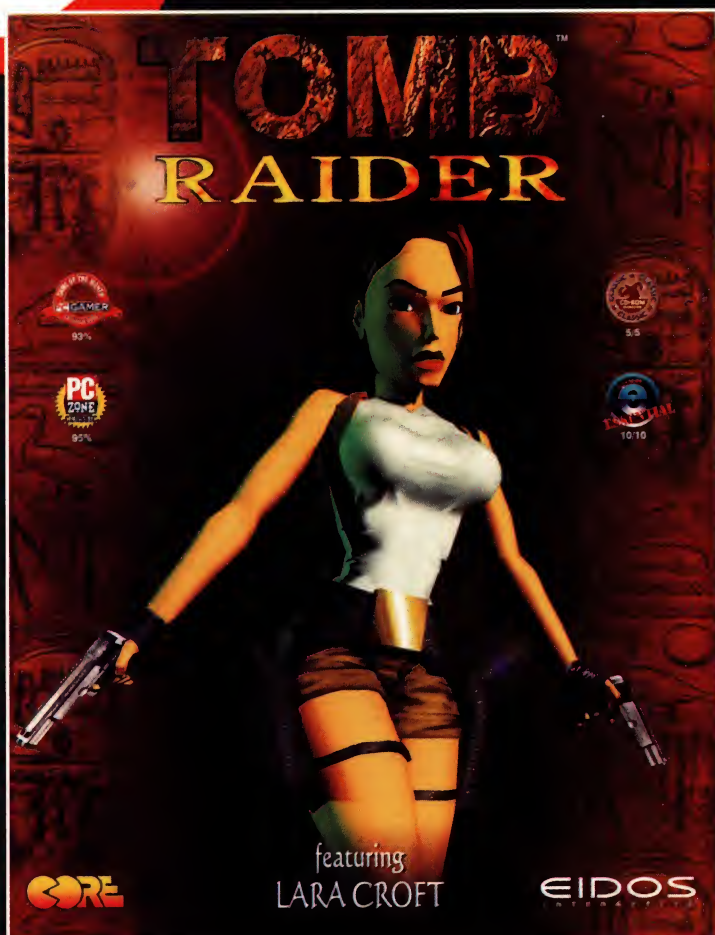
#### IRELAND

The Internet Exchange  
Drury Hall, Lower Stephen Street  
Dublin D2  
Web: <http://www.intex.ie/cafe.html>  
e-mail: [pczone@intex.ie](mailto:pczone@intex.ie)  
Tel: 353 1 4758788

#### WALES

The Cardiff Cybercafe Ltd  
9 Duke Street  
Cardiff CF1 2AY  
Web: <http://www.cardiffcybercafe.co.uk>  
e-mail: [pczone@cardiffcybercafe.co.uk](mailto:pczone@cardiffcybercafe.co.uk)  
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## Only in your dreams boy!

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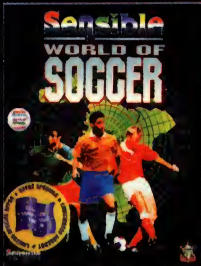
**our**price

Prices correct at time of going to press, and may vary in Eire.





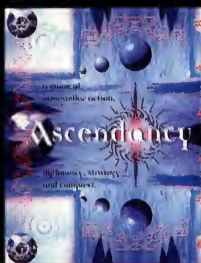
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## Interplay's Time Capsule

Fans of *Myst* will be delighted to hear that Interplay are soon to release a new graphically-rich adventure game, this time

based around an expedition to Atlantis. *Ark Of Time* takes the player across many different locations, including the Caribbean, Easter Island, Stonehenge and the fabled Underwater City, as he searches for a lost professor and

the secrets of an age (it says here). With lush graphics, a fully orchestral soundtrack and over 30 NPCs to interact with, *Ark Of Time* should be a very rewarding adventure. For more info try [www.interplay.com](http://www.interplay.com).

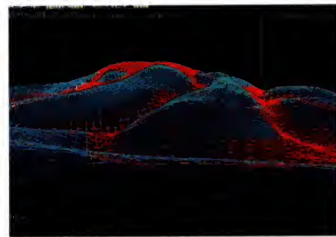


DATA PRO

# C&C and Doom to wed?



It was only a matter of time, but finally someone has decided to combine the relative merits of a first-person *Quake*-style game with the strategic challenge of a top-down *Command & Conquer*-style game. *Uprising* from 3DO gives you the chance to see what life is like from the little man's point of view, placing you as it does in the heart of the battlefield. You still have to carefully manage your resources, construct a command centre and other buildings and assign your troops to different functions, but now you get to see the results of your commands up close and personal. The 3DO Company expect to release *Uprising* some time next winter. **Z**



## Be Tiger Woods! Sort of... (part 2)

The long-standing stalwart of computer golf games, *PGA Tour Golf*, is back in the shape of *PGA Tour Pro*. With many new features such as 'flash' rendering (to speed up loading times), fully integrated network and Internet play (with EA's Sports Net Central homepage acting as a sort of virtual 'clubhouse' for players to meet, chat, join games and take part in tournaments), *PGA Pro* looks and plays better than ever. Perhaps the best new feature, though, is the advanced putting, allowing the player to walk around and inspect the state of greens before you take your shot. About time too. **Z**



## Coition Ignition Mission

Already looking eerily similar to Psygnosis' forthcoming *Speedster* (which in turn owes a heck of a lot to Codemasters' *Micro Machines*), Virgin Interactive's *Ignition* is yet another overhead racing game with super-fast 3D graphics and a host of twisting tracks to negotiate. There really is that little to tell these games apart.

Developed by UDA, *Ignition* promises to grow into quite an addictive experience once the novelty of the excellent 3D graphics has worn off.

Virgin's *Ignition* is scheduled for a September release, which should please Psygnosis who are launching *Speedster* at the end of next month. **Z**



(Above) *Ignition*'s miniature vehicles handle well enough on the narrow tracks. (Left) Ooh look - it's the obligatory 'ice' track, with dirty, cack-stained roads.

## HOT Line

Tracking the hottest games and their current release dates

X-COM3 (MicroProse)  
Jedi Knight (LucasArts)

Hexen 2 (Activision)  
Monkey Island 3 (LucasArts)  
Starcraft (Sierra)

SimCity 3000 (Maxis)

Quake 2 (id)  
Falcon 4.0 (MicroProse)  
Ultima IX (EA)  
Unreal (GT Interactive)

Populous 3 (EA)  
Rally 2 (Europress)  
Daikatana (EIDOS Interactive)  
Tomb Raider 2 (Core Design)

C&C 2: Tiberium Sun  
(Virgin Interactive)

Star Trek: First Contact  
(MicroProse)

FIGP3 (MicroProse)

The X-Files (Fox Interactive)

T I M E L I N E

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

JANUARY '98

FEBRUARY '98

MARCH '98



# New PowerVR and 3Dfx chipsets

Both VideoLogic and 3Dfx have unveiled forthcoming updates for their respective 3D accelerator cards. 3Dfx Voodoo graphics cards are set to take a leap in performance with the arrival of

a new chipset codenamed 'Banshee'. It's rumoured that Banshee will provide performance similar to 3Dfx's current Obsidian chipset, a popular piece of hardware intended for high-end workstation modelling and creation of military simulations. Banshee will be available early in 1998.

NEC/VideoLogic are hitting back with the announcement of the NEC PCX2 - their second version of the impressive PowerVR chipset - which is said to deliver an increase in performance over the PCX1 of over 50 per cent. We at PC Zone say: "That's great and that, but where are all the games?"

DATA PAD

## THE MAN WHO KNOWS



Some sinister happenings this month, although I'd say that what a gentleman gets up to in the privacy of his own study should remain the exclusive business of himself and his house guests. Meanwhile, fun and games abounded at Gametek with another twist in the long-running saga of *Battlecruiser 3000AD*. This, remember, is the game that was promised in 1993, shipped Stateside at the end of 1995 in a hideously bugged condition, and was rapidly followed by three patches and some single-figure review scores. Having mysteriously secured some impressive UK reviews almost two years ago, it was then controversially advertised by that young strumpet Joanne Guest straddling a copy of the game beneath the subtle legend "She really wants it". Naturally, if the lady in question were to spend a weekend at my country residence I can guarantee that "it" is exactly what she'd get, and you can rest assured that I'm not talking about long-awaited space trading games. Having finally been granted a UK release, the game's creator Derek Smart claimed that it was incomplete and issued the following statement: "UK owners, I urge you to return the game to your retailer as soon as possible. I am the sole owner and designer/lead developer of the game and I am telling you this." Hardly the most media-friendly of soundbites, this announcement clearly didn't go down too well with Gametek's marketing men, who were sent into overdrive on a damage limitation exercise. Following 'discussions' an agreement was reached and Smart announced: "Now that the unfortunate confusion has been cleared I am happy to support the Gametek release and am looking forward to working on additions to the *BC3000AD* range." The game entered the UK charts at number 12, with a Gametek representative boasting "It would seem that we have a hit on our hands", although let's not forget that the *Goomby Dance Band* once had a hit in the top 20.

More mither has befallen Shiny Entertainment, the team behind *MDK*, with the attempted poaching of *Tomb Raider* developers Toby Gard and Paul Douglas. Supremo Dave Perry (the lanky Ulsterman, not the bandanna-wearing whipping boy of *Gamesmaster*) was confident that he had convinced the pair to make the move from Derby to Laguna Beach and become Shiny Happy People, making noises to that effect on his Web page. However, Core and BIDOS strenuously denied the claim, prompting a war of words in which Perry claimed that the pair had been coerced into staying, as Core threatened to withhold their royalties. It seems that Gard and Douglas are now actually leaving Core, but not in the direction of Shiny. Mind you, the surfing in Derby isn't up to much.

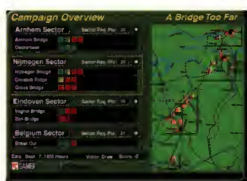
Last month's hint that Bullfrog stalwart Guy Simmons could be leaving to form his own company has proved prophetic. The lead programmer of the recently canned *Creation* is taking Mike Diskett and Fin McGeachie with him, the trio having previously worked on *Populous II*, *Theme Park*, *Magic Carpet* and *Syndicate Wars*. Following an all-night drinking session in Simmons' back garden, the sun rose to reveal a footprint on his patio doors, prompting the name Mucky Foot Productions. Work has already begun on their first project, tentatively titled *Dark City*.

*7th Level* have lost one of their founder members with the resignation of George Grayson, leaving record producer Bob Ezrin and tenuous Pink Floyd contributor Scott 'Mullet' Page to hold the fort following a drop in stock value from \$22 in September 1995 to the current level of \$4. If things get any worse, Page may be forced to sell his saxophone, which would come as a blessed relief to music lovers the world over.

Legal wrangles are the order of the day following the decision by Scavenger to drop *Into The Shadows*, prompting new development house Frozen Moose to pick up the project for completion. Swedish-based Frozen Moose consists largely of the initial programmers of the game, but complications with Scavenger mean that it may never see the light of day. As I say, legal wrangles, although fortunately I have a fellow who deals with that sort of thing for me.

But enough idle chat, that jeroboam of Mötet should be suitably chilled by now, and I have a pressing engagement in the master bedroom. Thank you, and good night... Z

## Even Closer Combat



One of the surprise hits of last year was Microsoft's *Close Combat*. Not just because it came from Microsoft but also because it was actually one of the more playable *Command & Conquer* clones to appear. Never ones to leave a cash cow unmilked, Microsoft have recently announced the sequel, *Close Combat 2*.

Focusing on Operation Market Garden, the game sees the Allies trying to capture key bridges throughout the Low Countries in order to gain control of the Rhine. Game improvements include multi-level buildings, true line of sight and elevation factors to consider and a more realistic reinforcements option. More news can be had from Microsoft's Web pages at [www.microsoft.com/games](http://www.microsoft.com/games). Z

## Win a CH Gamepad!



When is a pad not a pad? When it's all knackered and worn out after too much *Sensible Soccer*. That's why CH Products have ensured that their new gamepad has been manufactured to withstand the pressures of a champion gamer's lifestyle.

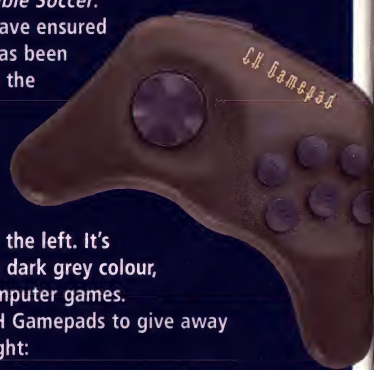
Eight buttons, six blue thumb-buttons and two top-mounted finger switches nestle neatly on the CH Gamepad's durable casing, with the matching D-pad to be found on the left. It's available with a very long cable, is an attractive dark grey colour, and can move stuff around in your favourite computer games.

To celebrate this fact, we have a bundle of CH Gamepads to give away to the first ten readers who get this question right:

Q. How many blue buttons does the CH Gamepad have?  
A. None B. Twenty-five C. Six

Answers on a postcard to: 'Pad-emonium'  
PC Zone CPCZ76B, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions  
Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK

Rules: All entries to be received by 20 June 1997.  
No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. Z



## Yoiks!

Those bloody gremlins have been around again, causing all kinds of bother in the PC Zone office. If we see another one of those things

around here again we'll wring its bleedin' neck. Getting us to say that Saitek's X36F and X36C control sticks are incompatible with ThrustMaster gear, when we all jolly well know that they ARE, was a

low-down dirty trick in itself. And the gremlin that jumped up the numbers on Multitech's 0118 959 7774 phone number will pay for that when we catch him! Those damned critters... Z





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our balls on  
the table.**

**now it's  
your turn.**

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# HOT Shots

This month we take a closer look at *Lands Of Lore: Guardians Of Destiny* from Westwood, Telstar's innovative new strategy game *Siege*, and *Atomic Bomberman*, the classic retro multi-playerfest action game from Interplay.



## Siege (Telstar)

Looking promising from Telstar is *Siege*, a real-time 3D combat game based in feudal 14th Century England.

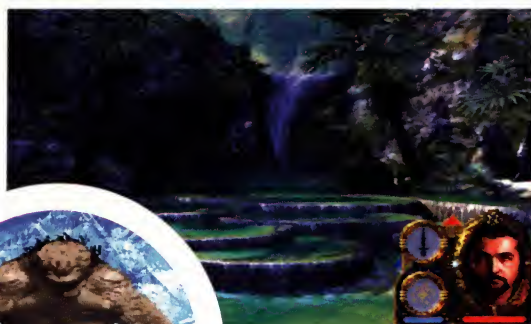
High resolution polygon graphics portray the action as players begin with a squad of 20, in an attempt to build up an army of over 200 for a raid on the biggest of over 20 different castles.

*Siege* will be playable in two different ways: strategically, with the player taking more of an overview of his combined forces, or first-person with the player taking control of real-time combat situations.



## Lands Of Lore: Guardians Of Destiny (Virgin/Westwood)

At last we have some in-game shots of Westwood Studios' highly anticipated *Lands Of Lore: Guardians Of Destiny*. An array of impressive pre-rendered *Guardians Of Destiny* artwork has been steadily filtering through the hands of the media since the game was first announced over three years ago. Only now, less than a month before the game's release, are Westwood confident enough to show us how the game itself will finally end up looking.

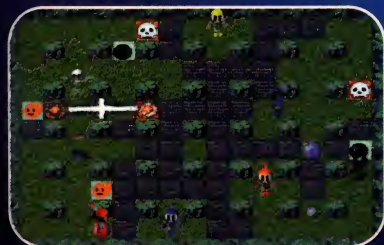
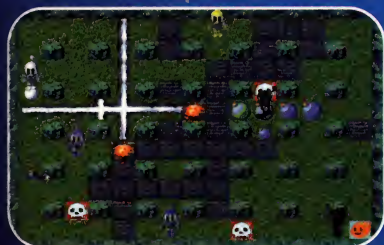




### Atomic Bomberman (Interplay)

We've waited a long, long time for the release of an updated PC version of Hudsonsoft's classic *Bomberman*, so we're relieved to hear that Interplay have announced that *Atomic Bomberman* will finally reach the shops in June. Tremendously popular across the console platforms, an

official conversion of this simple but compulsive multi-player arcade game has been absent for too long. This ten-player classic/enhanced hybrid, developed by Kinesoft, should address this deficiency.







**Patrick McCarthy** went all the way to Paris to talk to the man behind the *Prince Of Persia* games, **Jordan Mechner**, about comics, animation and the forthcoming *The Last Express*.

# ...Jordi! What's



**ORDAN MECHNER** POPULARISED THE concept of jumping from rooftops, stabbing Arabs and falling on spikes by way of his two *Prince Of Persia* games.

Beautifully animated, with a good blend of platform action and minor puzzles, they made his fortune. And now he's abandoned all that for *The Last Express*, a point-and-click adventure set on the last Orient Express to cross Europe before the outbreak of WW1. It has, at first glance, worrying elements of the dreaded interactive movie about it. Why would anyone want to go that route? Let's ask him, shall we?

Why turn your back on money-spinning platform games to produce an interactive movie? They seem to sell well in the States, but have a pretty poor reputation in the UK. I don't like interactive movies myself. I think they have a bad rep in the US, too. But *The Last Express* isn't like an interactive movie: there's nothing constraining you as to where you're going to go. And depending on where you go, you'll see and hear different conversations and events...

**So events aren't triggered by your arrival?**

No... It's subtly rigged so that you have a lot more chance of seeing things, but there's no way you can play through the game and see everything, even if you start from the beginning and do everything right.

**You have a fair bit of film-making experience. Did that help during the making of the game?**

Yes, it did. If I hadn't had to get used to doing things on a low budget to a tight schedule, then I would've been in even more over my head than I was. We had to shoot an enormous amount of material in three weeks – 17 screenplay pages a day, when the average is about three. The cameras were running almost constantly. It was a logistical nightmare.

**Given the work involved, wouldn't it have been easier to make the whole thing computer-generated?**

It would definitely have been easier from the production point of view if the characters had been motion captured computer models... But we wanted to capture the particular personality and character of each actor – motion capture's great for

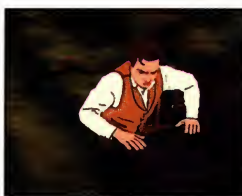
everything from the neck down, but even if you take a beautiful face and map it on, you've still got a beautiful face mapped on to a computer model and it feels like you're in a train populated by robots.

**You're into clean-line style comics, aren't you?**

Yes, the inspiration for the game's look came from European comics. Hugo Pratt is one of my favourites. His books are all really well researched, always packed with information about some exotic locale – there's one about the Masons in Venice which is really good. And I like Bilal. He has a very clean-line style with very subtle choice of colours. You know Bilal?

I've seen his stuff. I used to get a magazine about European and American comics called *Escape* that had a lot of clean-line stuff in it. I like it, but I can never remember any of the names under pressure... which is always handy.

(Laughs) Well, we wanted the game's story to be like a kind



*The Last Express* has lovely graphics, which you can stare at if you get stuck.

Gorgeous location scenery like this is prevalent throughout *The Last Express*. Jordan wanted to recreate the atmosphere of the period and we think he's pulled it off admirably.



Jordan Mechner set new standards for the platform genre with his classic leap 'em up, *Prince Of Persia*.



# your game?

of animated interactive comic book – it's more like a comic than a movie, because some of the actions are dissolve-frames rather than full-motion.

**You did the whole of Prince Of Persia yourself, didn't you?** Uh-huh.

**What's it like to go from that to having huge teams of people working for you? Do you get frustrated and start thinking you can do better yourself?**

The great thing about having a large team is that you get people who are better at their jobs than I would be myself. But the temptation's there to go look over someone's shoulder and basically... meddle.

**Has making this made you want to get back into making films again?**

Er, yeah. I guess that part of the reason I like making games is because it's basically a chance to create a story.

**Like making a comic – there are things you can do that you can't in a film...**

Yeah... and there are things you can do in a film that you can't do in a comic, or in a game. I guess my ideal life would be if I could hop between all three: do a game, then a film, then a comic...

**Or a game, then a spin-off movie?**

Actually, in the case of *The Last Express*, I can think of a number of ways that it could be a great movie, but it's almost like a coincidence. I mean, I wouldn't want to see a lot of games as a movie – and why would you want to make the same thing twice? But one of the great things about films as opposed to games is that you get to go on location.

**Do you play many games?**

I used to, but I've been working on one for the last four years, and when I get home it's not really what I want to do.

**So this retro gaming thing has pretty much passed you by?** Retro gaming? What's that?

**People put Spectrum emulators on their PCs and play crap old games with a tear in their eye... Asteroids, and all that kind of stuff.**

Actually, *Asteroids* was one of the first games I programmed. I spent about six months trying to do a completely faithful rip-off that played just like the arcade. I made sure all the rocks were identical... well, I was in High School... I don't know why I thought that would be a good idea... (Laughs) Anyway, I've just started playing *Tomb Raider* on the PlayStation.

**It's quite slow on the PlayStation.**

Is it? It's the only PlayStation game I've got.

**Okay, it's time for the heavy questions: computer monitors are notoriously bad for the skin, and sitting in front of them all day can lead to enlarged pores and dry skin problems. Do you follow any particular beauty regime?** (Laughs)

**Are you a Moisturiser Man?**

Actually, I was thinking... I have four monitors on my desk... If you have enough monitors, and you spend enough hours at the office, you should be able to eventually develop super-powers. I used to be a girl.

**Er, well... Your brother did all the actions for Prince Of Persia, didn't he? Did he make any money out of it?**

I bought him a sandwich that day...

**Did it influence his chosen career – did he become a stuntman?**

On the contrary, I think it deterred him from any plans he may have had to follow an athletic career.

**What, falling on those spikes?**

Well, you can't see it in the game, because we did a lot of visual enhancement to the animation, but when he did that running jump he basically only managed to clear about two feet. It was really quite depressing. I had him do it again and again, and each time he went a shorter distance. He became a master of the Chinese strategy game *Go* instead... and now he's in graduate school. So you see what can happen.

**It's all gone horribly wrong. So what's your favourite game?**

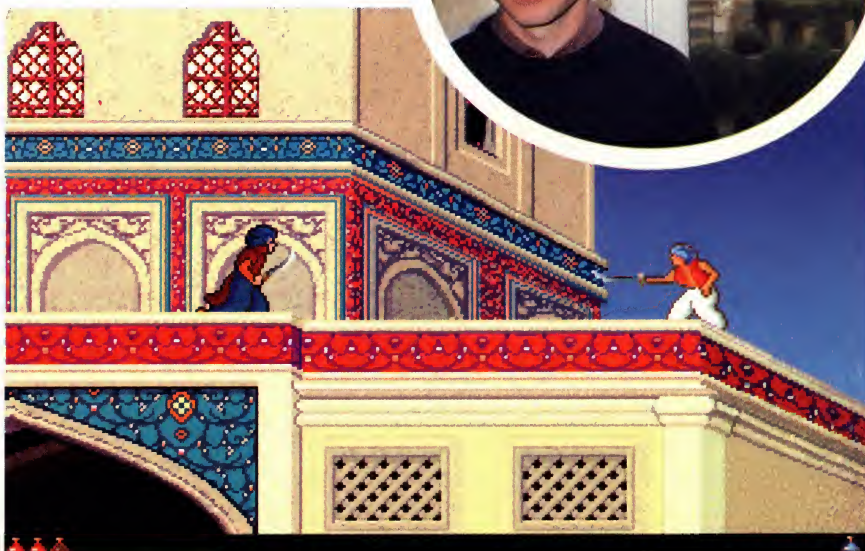
Well, staying in retro mode, I really enjoyed all the Scott Adams text adventures... *Mystery Fun House*, and so on. They were pretty awful, but fun at the time. And *Tetris*.

**Which version? Everyone usually says the Gameboy one...**

Actually, I've got a story about *Tetris*. The Russian guy who did it submitted it to Brøderbund – same gameplay but without the Russian backgrounds and music. Even though Brøderbund have very strict guidelines for confidentiality of submissions and people are very serious about it, within days everybody in Brøderbund had a copy of it. We were having *Tetris* tournaments... even Doug, Brøderbund's CEO at the time, was a *Tetris* addict. Unbelievably, they didn't take the game. Anyway, Roland Gustafsen saw it and reverse-engineered it – basically just programmed it on the Apple. Nobody paid him – he just did the conversion on his own. But that was my favourite game: the unpublished Apple II version of *Tetris*. Z

A lot of work has gone into the animation for all of the characters in *The Last Express* – they are modelled on real-life counterparts.

*Prince Of Persia* may not look very impressive now, but it was a remarkable achievement for its time.





PC  
ZONE

our price

CHART  
*Predictions*

LAST MONTH WAS WITHOUT doubt an excellent month for Star Wars fans, with most of you taking advantage of the great money-off promotion on offer from Our Price.

Following on from the excitement and success of the *Star Wars* phenomenon, this month sees three new entries in the Our Price Top 10, all at great

prices. New in at No 3 in the chart is *Actua Soccer*, priced at just £7.99 – we challenge you to find it anywhere else for less! Also entering the chart are *C&C: Counterstrike* at No 6 with *Yoda Stories* close behind at No 9, retailing at £14.99 and £19.99 respectively. And, as if that's not enough, this month also sees the ever-popular *Ultimate Soccer Manager 2* reduced in price from £29.99 to £19.99 – a must-have if you don't already have it in your games collection.

To take part in this month's Our Price Top 10 prize giveaway, put pen to paper and answer the question below and send it in to: PC Zone Our Price Competition CPCZ76A, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK.

**OUR PRICE QUESTION:**  
**What is the lead character in MDK called?**

Rules and restrictions: All entries must be received by Thursday 29 May 1997. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply.

WATCH  
THIS SPACE  
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NEWS FROM OUR  
PRICE NEXT  
MONTH!

Welcome to PC Zone's version of *The Chart Show*, sponsored by Our Price. Each month it'll feature the titles we think will be flying off the shelves in the coming weeks, and it will also play host to exclusive news and competitions.

1

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2

**MDK**  
(Interplay)  
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3

**ACTUA SOCCER**  
(Gremlin)  
£7.99



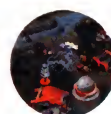
4

**CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2**  
(EIDOS Interactive)  
£9.99



5

**C&C: RED ALERT**  
(Virgin)  
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6

**C&C: COUNTERSTRIKE**  
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7

**TOMB RAIDER**  
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9

**YODA STORIES**  
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10

**TERMINATOR SKYNET**  
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DISCLAIMER: The Top 10 printed is correct at the time of going to press but positions, titles and prices may vary throughout the month.



If you spend too much time staring at your keyboard you'll miss out on the fabulous in-game graphics in *Terracide*. Don't despair, simply cut out this keyboard template and then you'll be able to keep your eyes glued to the screen and still get past level four.



SHIFT + FUNC	NET TAUNTS
SHIFT + FIRE	FIRE LEFT
CTRL + FIRE	FIRE RIGHT

1	2	3	4
PHOTON	BOMB	ROCKET	CHAIN

5	6	7	8
BOUNCING BOMB	SPECIAL	GUIDED	

9	0	/	*
	DISMOUNT	TOGGLE HUD	TOGGLE HUD 2



Q	W	E	T	Y	I
FIRE MAIN	DROP WAYPOINT	DETONATE SPECIAL	MESSAGE (NET)	SCORE (NET)	INFO

TERRACIDE

This keyboard template has been created by *PC Zone* for purchasers of the game *Terracide*, published by EIDOS Interactive. It is not approved or endorsed in any way by EIDOS Interactive.

All rights recognised.

SHIFT MOUNT L WEAPON	A INCREASE SPEED	D ROLL	F FLARE	G ZOOM	SPACEBAR STRAFE	V CAM MODE	C FIRE RIGHT	X FIRE LEFT	Z DECREASE SPEED	CTRL MOUNT R WEAPON	TURN LEFT	N NOSE DOWN	↑ NOSE UP	→ TURN RIGHT
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# WIN WIN WIN

UBI SOFT GO EVEN SOFTER and give away some fab competition prizes



TO CELEBRATE THEIR OVERWHELMING success with *Pod*, Ubi Soft have decided to give away £1000 worth of free goodies to more than a few *PC Zone* readers. Here's what you can win:

## 1st Prize

A top of the range ThrustMaster steering wheel and a copy of *Pod* to test it with



## 2nd Prize

Five lucky readers will each receive *Pod* Puffa jackets, each with a copy of *Pod* tucked up their sleeves



## 3rd Prize

Ten readers will each receive a copy of *Pod*



## Spot the difference

All you've got to do to enter our fab compo is screw your eyes up really really tight, stare at the two screenshots (right) for absolutely ages, and try your utmost to work out which screenshot is taken from the normal Windows 95 version of *Pod*, and which is from the visually stunning 3Dfx version. Once you've done that, fill out the details below, send the form in to us (to reach us not later than 1 June 1997) and we'll notify you if you've come up trumps.



I have used my superior skills of detection to ascertain that the 3Dfx version of *Pod* is shown in:

- ☐ Picture A  
☐ Picture B

(Please tick one only)

Name: .....

Job Title: .....

Company Name: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

Daytime phone number: .....

☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies.

☐ Tick if under 18 years of age.

Please tick one only: ☐ Are you a current subscriber? ☐ Are you a regular reader? ☐ Are you an irregular reader?

**Terms and conditions:** All usual restrictions apply, for a copy of the rules please write to *PC Zone* at the usual address. All entries must be received by 1 June 1997. Send this coupon to: *PC Zone/Ubi Soft competition (CPCZ75B)*, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK.

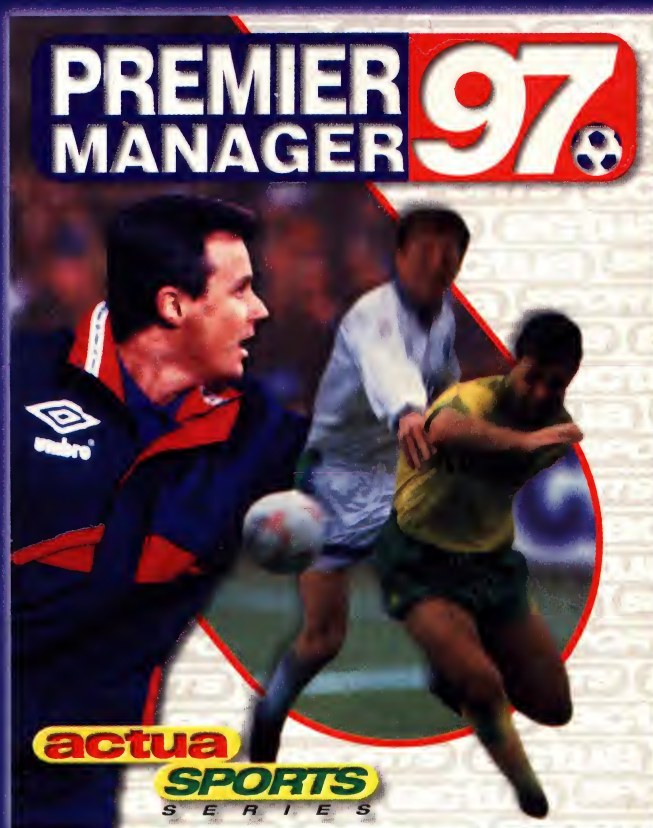
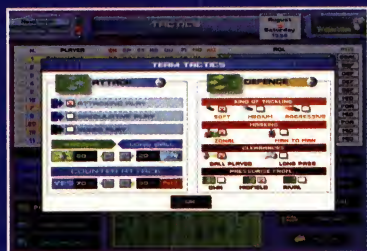


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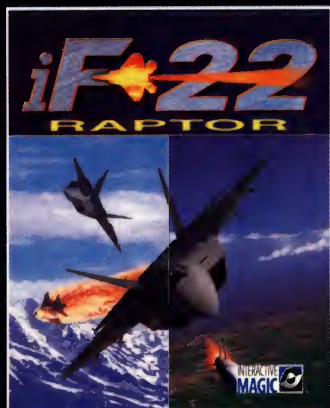


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# THE CURSE OF

# Monkey

PC Zone went understandably bonkers when LucasArts revealed that they were working on another *Monkey Island* game. On a recent jaunt to LucasArts' HQ, **Jeremy Wells** caught up with two of the team responsible for producing what must be one of the most keenly awaited games ever and refused to leave until they revealed – well, at least something.





# Island

**T**

HE MONKEY ISLAND GAMES ARE held by all those who know them in a kind of revered state of wonderfulness, so much so, that to criticise either in the Zone office would be tantamount to wishing a severe bout of herpes on the Queen Mother while in conversation with an elderly relative at a family gathering. So why have so many been taken in by *Monkey's* spell? What makes it so special?

Maybe it's the fact that when the first game came out way back in 1990 the PC was just beginning to stand up as a games platform. Mention *Monkey Island* and people automatically go misty-eyed and hark back to those days of the 386 as the memories and anecdotes just come flooding back. Ask what made the *Monkey* games so memorable and as well as numerous looks of loathing you'll get a number of similar ripostes: "They were just so funny." "They were real adventure games, not the kind of lightweight crap you get nowadays." "You got gameplay by the bucketload instead of fancy graphics."

So the graphics were crap? "No! The graphics were brilliant."

"The characters and storyline were just excellent." Etc, etc.



**PC Zone:** LucasArts said that after *Monkey 2* they'd never do another *Monkey Island* game. What changed your minds?

**Larry:** We have no idea. I guess nobody bothered to tell us that we weren't supposed to do one.

**Jonathon:** We wanted to do this game because we're *Monkey Island* fans. Guybrush is a fun character and we just knew that we'd have a great time thinking up scenarios for him.

**PC Zone:** Where did you start?

**Larry:** As we began to work on the puzzles, we knew that we could get into a lot more piratey situations. We really wanted the player to do more swash-buckley things, like firing a cannon at another ship and other cool pirate things. We couldn't do these things before because we were limited by the technology we were using.

**Jonathon:** When we looked back at *Monkey*, the thing that really stood out was the non-linearity – in particular the three-trial structure on Melee island. In *Monkey 3* there are actually two different islands and each has a three or five-trial structure, so if you get stuck you'll be able to go and explore another, and if you get stuck there move on to another. We didn't want people to just get stuck and frustrated, so we designed it so you can go back and forth and solve the puzzles in just about any order.

We didn't want people to hit a brick wall and just get bored because there wasn't anything interesting or funny to do. You'll always hit a brick wall eventually, it

## Another classic in the making?

The fact that people still talk about *Monkey Island* some seven years after the first game was released and that it's currently doing massively well as a budget title on the Virgin White Label range is testament itself that the *Monkey* games will indeed go down in history as gaming classics. People still remember the characters, such as Stan the second-hand ship salesman and fondly recall the incidents like the insult fight just as fondly as they might a scene from TV's *Black Adder* or a character from *The Fast Show*.

A while back LucasArts declared that they wouldn't be making another *Monkey* game. Ron Gilbert had left the company and few people (including at this point LucasArts) felt that they could ever expect to emulate or even better the humour, characterisation and storyline of *Monkey's* creator, let alone take on the responsibility and shoulder the massive expectation of the world's adventure gamers. In short, who would be mad enough to even attempt to try and top what had gone before?

We spoke to co-producers Jonathon Ackley and Larry Ahern, as we thought it only fair to give them the chance to explain themselves...

## With special guest stars...

### GUYBRUSH

Guybrush Threepwood is one of the great computer heroes of our time. As per usual with these kinds of stories, Guybrush was bumbling, inept and naive, but blessed with the kind of extraordinary luck and cartoon physiology that allowed him to be shot out of a pirate cannon, spend hours underwater without running out of air and undergo all manner of extreme pain without so much as a squeak of explanation.



When the games were at their peak there was often talk of a *Monkey Island* movie, with Michael J Fox tipped as the most likely actor for the role. In the latest game he's lost the beard and to quote one observer on the Web, "Looks a bit nerdy". Like duh! – he's supposed to be?

### ELAINE

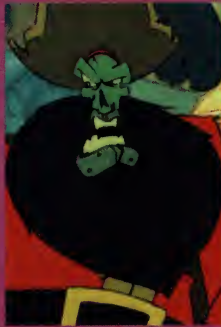
Governor Elaine Marley was an ex-pirate herself who'd made good and become the fair and just ruler of Melee Island (Guybrush's home town). Like any woman given just a smidgen of power she was, of course, an icy cold bitch. Eventually however, Guybrush won her heart (mainly by saving her from becoming LeChuck's wife) and the two lived happily ever after – until the sequel that is when it was revealed that the



pair had split up and hadn't seen each other for ages, only to be reunited when Elaine got trapped in a giant hole with Guybrush at the start of *Monkey Island 2*. In the new game, Elaine hasn't really changed much, she's just a little bit glam and now speaks with a psuedo sexy voice.

### LECHUCK

The evil ghost pirate LeChuck was both a ghost and, er, a pirate. Commanding a fearsome crew of the undead (I say fearsome – they were more like the underworld equivalent of *Dad's Army*), LeChuck had originally set out to conquer Melee Island and marry Governor Elaine Marley before Guybrush stumbled in his way. For the sequel, LeChuck plotted his revenge and was only prevented by Guybrush finding the power



of the Big Whoop (don't ask – just go and play *Monkey 2* for yourself). In the third instalment, he's taken on quite a transformation, and of all the re-drawn characters, looks the most impressive, so he's obviously a favourite with the team.



# THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND



The first *Monkey Island* game (left) had a very distinctive look and used an innovative and very easy to use interface. It even starred Scary Spice. The sequel (right) looked a little more polished, but still retained all the charm and humour of the original release.

◀ happens with every adventure game, otherwise it wouldn't be a challenge. We want the puzzles to be hard, but at the same time we wanted the environment to be full of characters and interactive, so when you hit a brick wall, at least there's something to keep you amused until you find your way again.

**PC Zone:** The game looks (creep) gorgeous. What's enabled you to make the graphics so much better than, say, *The Dig*?

**Larry:** The first noticeable difference is that we have the 'SCUMM' system running in 640x480 resolution. In addition to that, we have a system that allows us to use hand-drawn, fully anti-aliased characters, both in the cut-scenes and interactively, so it's really hard to even notice pixels (but there are a few). Plus, we just tried to make really, really neat art, and I guess it paid off.

**Jonathon:** Allowing our artists to do their animating on paper rather than on the computer has allowed for some really dynamic animations. But we know that art is just part of the equation. *The Dig* was successful because of its strong gameplay. We know *Monkey* fans expect a great game as well as a great-looking game. *Full Throttle*, for example, had such a punch because of the way the video cuts were implemented. What we want to do with *Monkey 3* is give it all the punch of *Full Throttle*, but still retain the depth of play of games like *Monkey Island 2* and *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*. We were very conscious of wanting to go back to the true style of gameplay that made the *Monkey* games so popular. Having said that, I thought that *Full Throttle* was a good game, it just wasn't long enough.

**PC Zone:** The way the last game ended must have made it difficult for you. How will *Curse* take up the story?

**Larry:** It wasn't really a problem for us, but at the same time we didn't want to ignore what had happened at the end of *Monkey 2*. So without giving too much away, *Curse* starts with Guybrush not being fully aware of what's happened himself, although he thinks it's got something to do with some kind of voodoo curse. Hopefully, as you play the game you'll slowly start to figure out what has happened, but in a very subtle way. The idea is that for people who haven't played *Monkey 1* and *2*, or haven't played them in a while, things will still become clear, but at the same time you'll be able to skip past them if you want to.

**PC Zone:** Just like *Full Throttle*, *Monkey 3* has some 'arcade' bits in it. Some people criticised *Full Throttle* for this reason, so why have you decided to include them?

**Larry:** Because the 'arcade' bits in *The Curse Of Monkey Island* are just so darn fun.

**Jonathon:** The arcade sequences are very simple and



## In case you didn't know...

### THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND (FIRST RELEASED IN 1990)

*The Secret Of Monkey Island* is still heralded as one of the funniest adventure games ever to swash its way across a computer screen. Ron Gilbert's tale of a young pirate wannabe trying to earn his stripes had everything a good adventure game could possibly need: a strong, clever storyline, brilliant dialogue, extremely well-structured puzzles, and length.

The tale told of Guybrush Threepwood, embarking upon the Three Trials that every pirate cadet needs to pass, went on to chart Guybrush's discovery of the fabled Monkey Island and finally saw him fighting the evil ghost pirate LeChuck and saving his beloved Governor Marley.

Among the many delights on offer was a truly brilliant sword fighting section (rather than landing the player with an annoying action sub-game in the middle of things, each sword fight took the form of trading insults with your opponent. Work out the correct response to a particular cutting remark and you'd gain the upper hand), and a bizarre supporting cast including voodoo priestesses, out of work pirates, a used-ship salesman and the amazing, stupendous, astounding, etc Fettucini Brothers (a travelling circus troupe).

*Monkey Island* practically re-invented the adventure game and is still one of the most playable titles today. A true classic.

### MONKEY ISLAND 2: LECHUCKS' REVENGE (FIRST RELEASED IN 1991)

*Monkey Island 2* appeared a year or so after the original and while not quite as ground-breaking as its predecessor, it was (and still is) one of the best adventure games around, and a damn fine sequel to boot. Again penned by the annoyingly talented Ron Gilbert, *Monkey Island 2* this time saw Guybrush having to reface his (im)mortal enemy LeChuck, who had risen from the grave and was intent on revenge.

The game opened up Guybrush's world, allowing him to travel to a number of different islands, encountering all manner of weird and wonderful characters (including a famous spitting contest scene), before finally putting paid to LeChuck for good. Or so he thinks.

The strangest thing about the sequel (and the one area that the new game will find hardest to explain) was the game's ending. If you don't want to know what happened skip the rest of this paragraph, but essentially the game ended with Guybrush waking up as a small child in a present-day funfair, as if to say that the past two games had all been one big dream. A cop-out ending perhaps, but after providing us with hours of the most enjoyable gaming ever, you can forgive them.

easy to learn. However, we know that many adventure gamers aren't thrilled by the idea of "pulse-pounding action" or "split-second timing." So, at the appropriate time during the game, the player can select the "Extremely Unchallenging mode". It's still good fun, but we guarantee that no one will be stuck in the arcade sequences unless they feel that they're up for the challenge.

**PC Zone:** Please can you explain how the interactive icon thingummybob works?

**Larry:** It's similar to the 'pop-up' interface from *Full Throttle*, but we've made some additions to increase the level of interactivity. As in *Full Throttle*, the 'pop-up' interface allows objects in a room to be examined, talked to and manipulated. In *Curse Of Monkey Island*, you can also use the 'pop-up' interface on items in your inventory. In *Full Throttle* you could use your inventory objects with room objects. You can still do this in *Monkey 3*, but the new interface also allows inventory objects to be used and combined with other inventory objects. It really opens up a lot of puzzle possibilities.

**PC Zone:** How do you feel the characters (especially Guybrush) have developed since the first game?

**Larry:** Guybrush started out as a fairly naïve pirate

The graphics in the latest game are so detailed it's hard to tell what's in-game and what's not. (Below left). Although there will be cut scenes in *Curse*, they will be kept short so as not to distract the player from the task in hand.

### Product details

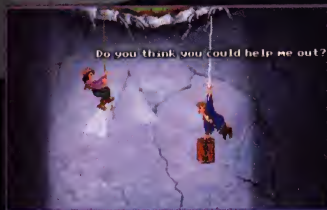
Developer: LucasArts

Publisher: VIE

Website: [www.LucasArts.com](http://www.LucasArts.com)

Release Date: September





Larry Ahern (below left) began his LucasArts career as an animator on *Monkey Island 2*, and later went on to work on both *Day Of The Tentacle* and *Full Throttle* as lead animator. Jonathon Ackley (below right) worked as a programmer on *Day Of The Tentacle*, *Full Throttle* and *The Dig*.

wannabe, and through his many heroic adventures, has pretty much evolved into a naïve pirate. He's quicker with his wits than in his younger days, but when it comes to women he still retains that wonderfully worthless quality that melted Elaine's heart so long ago. And he's shaved his beard.

LeChuck is still pathetically obsessed with destroying Guybrush and winning Elaine, and is as rotten (literally) as ever. That is, until he gets killed (this is the third time now) in a horrible voodoo fireball, and transformed into a demon pirate with a flaming beard (great for scaring other sailors senseless, bad for chapped lips).

And Elaine still kicks butt – at least until Guybrush bumbles things for her. Other than that, there are a few of your other favourite characters returning from the first two games, but we'll keep them a surprise for now.

**PC Zone:** Are the *Monkey Island* characters based on anyone in particular?

**Larry:** We'd like to think that there's a little bit of Guybrush in us all and that... I mean, no, not really.

**PC Zone:** Who's your favourite character in the game?

**Larry:** Murray, the demonic skull. He wants so desperately to scare someone. Maybe it'll be you.

**Jonathon:** I'm quite fond of Edward Van Helgen... the famous barber-duellist.

**PC Zone:** Tell me your favourite joke.

**Jonathon:** Okay, so these two trapeze artists walk into a bar... Oh, you mean from the game?

**PC Zone:** Okay, so what's your favourite comic incident from TV/film?

**Larry:** I recently saw the film *Arizona Dream*, and this girl is suicidal and mad at her mom, so during a dinner party she takes off her pantyhose, goes upstairs to the balcony and tries to hang herself from the chandelier, but it doesn't work because it stretches to the ground. So it becomes this comical bungee-hanging. And Mom ignores the daughter because apparently she does it all the time.

**Jonathon:** Good heavens, Larry!

**PC Zone:** If only we had that kind of cable over here.

So you've just had a hard day at the office, being funny and writing gags and all you want to do is go home, crack open a beer and smile. Who do you turn to. Who makes you laugh?

**Larry:** *The Kids In The Hall*, Dilbert and Jim Nabors.

**Jonathon:** Woody Allen, Jerry Seinfeld, Kermit the Frog.

**PC Zone:** Thanks Jonathon, at least our readers will know who you're going on about. So Larry, what does it feel like having the expectation of the world's gaming adventure gamers creaming themselves over what will surely be one of the games of the year?

**Larry:** We feel really lucky to have such a large audience anticipating the release of the product.

**Jonathon:** There are a lot of people here at LucasArts who want to make sure that *The Curse Of Monkey Island* is done right. So it's meant a great deal to me when I've been stopped in the halls and co-workers have told me that they have seen the game and that they're really excited by how it's turning out.

**PC Zone:** People say there are different types of international humour (British humour is considered very different from American, say). How have you tackled this in *Monkey 3*?

**Larry:** The first two *Monkey Island* games seem to have translated wonderfully in foreign markets. We just tried to stay true to the style of those games. That, and we added a few more gross jokes for good measure.

**PC Zone:** What makes *Monkey 3* different from the previous two games?



**"We can guarantee that *The Curse Of Monkey Island* will contain more monkeys than *Monkey 1&2* combined"**  
**Larry Ahern, Co-Producer**





# THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND

◀ **Larry:** I would have to say that it's monkeys. In fact, we made a nice bar graph for our design document, showing the relative amount of monkeys in each of the three games. And, in fact, we can guarantee that *The Curse Of Monkey Island* will contain more monkeys than *Monkey 1 & 2* combined. Although it looks like it's gonna end up having more fast-food proprietors and hair stylists as well.

**Jonathon:** Besides that, and the obvious huge leap forward in production values, we wanted to give players much of the same kind of gaming experience that they got from *Monkey 1 & 2* (in both the feel and the length of the game).

Then, of course, there's LeChuck's transformation into an undead demonic hellspawn, and Guybrush and Elaine and that whole sexual tension thing, but otherwise it's business as usual deep in the Caribbean.

**PC Zone:** So why are you confident that it will be better?

**Jonathon:** Because when you have a fun set of characters like these, and two great products that came before, there's quite a good



**Jonathon:** It's hard sometimes because we're so close to it, but when something new comes together you finally get to see how the guys have animated a scene, or how they've implemented a certain sound effect, and I still can't help smiling to myself. It's a very funny game, we're sure of that.

**Larry:** It's great seeing all the characters come to life, and see the gag that you've written finally come together on-screen. It's like you know the punch-line, but it just comes alive and cracks me up. The characters are just so strong, they make things humorous, because we know them so well. It's like we put them into situations and then wait for them to react. The humour sort of comes from within itself. We're really happy with the way it's going.


**PC Zone:** What question are you glad I haven't asked?

**Larry:** What's that weird thing hanging off your nose?

**Jonathon:** Do you think those earrings really go with your dress?

**PC Zone:** And, what's the answer?

**Larry:** What thing on my nose?

**Jonathon:** It's the bustle, isn't it? C'mon, you can tell me - is the bustle too much? 



blueprint to build from. And we like to try and one-up ourselves each time. We think we were able to identify a lot of the elements that worked best from our previous graphic adventures and combine those into *Curse*. And, you know, it's the latest thing, and it's new and improved and all that. So, how can you lose?

**PC Zone:** So when can we expect *Monkey 4*?

**Larry:** We'll never make a *Monkey 4*... maybe.

**PC Zone:** Would you like to do a 3D adventure?

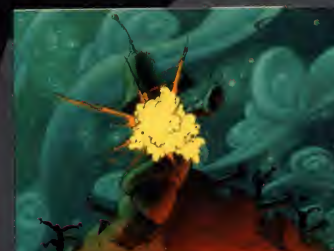
**Larry:** We'll never do a 3D adventure... unless...

**PC Zone:** Okay, we get the picture. So what other adventure games have impressed you? (In other words, when you have time, what do you play?)

**Larry:** In terms of visuals, I liked *The Neverhood* and *9*.

**Jonathon:** Using my tax software was a real adventure. It had hours of gameplay value.

**PC Zone:** You've been working on *Monkey 3* for nearly two years now, do you still find it funny and rewarding?



(Top) Just like *Full Throttle*, *The Curse Of Monkey Island* will feature 'arcade' style segments that permeate the plot. There will be an option to side-step these however, if the player would rather stick to good old-fashioned point and click adventurin'.

## A new way of doing things...

Just like *Full Throttle*, *The Curse Of Monkey Island* uses an innovative 'pop-up' interface that allows the player to talk to other characters and examine and manipulate objects. It's shaped like a gold doubloon and can also be used on items in your inventory.

"We want to give the player lots of options as far as conversations with other characters go, so you'll always have a good choice of things to say," maintains Jonathon. "This means that we can keep the interactivity levels high, and build in plenty of variation. You'll be able to go off on complete tangents, just like you could in the first two games. The new interface has allowed us to come up with a whole range of new puzzles. It allows the player to use and combine items in their inventory with other inventory objects, as well as room objects. Basically, it gives us a lot more scope when designing the game and at the same time it's easy for the player to use and understand."



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# pod

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(Top) "We're going to have lots of highly realistic underwater scenes."  
(Bottom) Power-ups for *Blood* include: invulnerability ("pretty standard"), reflective shots ("reflect damage of vector weapons back at the firer"), medkit ("à la *Nukem*"), jump boots ("obvious"), and armour ("three different types, protecting you against physical, fire and spirit damage"). Here our hero is invisible and has 'guns akimbo'.



## BLOOD



*Blood* might not be as technically adept as the big *Q*, but you can rest assured that it will be a lorra, lorra fun nevertheless.

**David McCandless** went to Seattle with EIDOS to see trendy developers Monolith and their new gore 'em up, *Blood*. Apparently, according to our Stateside taxi drivers, our petrol is "too expensive" and our currency is "the shilling". Isn't that just fascinating?



THE FIRST MONOLITH BOD I MANAGED TO pin down to bombard with questions was Jason Hall. He's a nauseating 25 years old and already the Chief Executive Officer of a 70-strong games company, courted by the infinite credit cards of companies like EIDOS. In fact, nobody around the plush conference room table in their Seattle HQ looks a day over 30. They're a mish-mash of coders and designers and we're here to chew the fat about *Blood*, their first major game. It's a 3D shooter no less, using an enhanced version of Duke Nukem's Build engine. It's got a kind of weird Doom-y, Hexen-y, Duke-y kinda feel to it, with some healthy B-movie/zombie film influences tossed in.

But first of all, here's how he describes this new 'fash' of a development house gaining overnight success: "Monolith started as a demo group. We hung out, played games, made demos together. We stuck a demo on a CD and somehow –

magically – Microsoft got hold of it, so they got us to code their Windows 95 games sampler CD. We wound up talking to all the largest software developers and publishers, all the key players in the industry. And we went on from there." He ends by saying: "...and Monolith's philosophy is for team work, a family."

Hmmmm. This may sound like SAMB to you (Shiny American Marketing Bollocks) and it is SAMB to a certain extent – but wandering around Monolith's Seattle HQ, you feel a nice warm loving ambience. Ooh, you espy a little arcade machine room. And wow – free soft drinks. Gosh, a big fat Pentium on every desk. Everyone's playing games. Sporadic deathmatches flare up around the 'campus'. Healthy abuse bounces around the acoustic partitions. Company field trips have been organised to the premieres of every new sci-fi film. As a place of work, Monolith – in Seattle geek speak – is definitely 'cool' (pronounced 'koh!').

Fair enough. But let's see how Nick Newhard, designer stroke lead programmer and Craig Hubbard, level designer, plus the oh-so-youthful Jason handle a grilling from the *PC Zone* Interview-o-tron™. (What? – Ed)

**PCZ:** Okay Quentins, let's start on a fairly tame opener. What's the plot of *Blood*?

**Nick:** You're part of a cabal. A cult. But you've been thrown down by the person you worshipped and worked for.

**PCZ:** That's it?

**Nick:** No. You're not just good versus evil. You're *evil* trying to fight a bigger evil. There's no specific time frame. The setting combines the futuristic with a different, supernatural industrial revolution. It also has voodoo in it.

**PCZ:** Yeah, sounds quite impressive. Give us some examples of why *Blood* is so cool.

**Nick:** Everything can be blown up.

**PCZ:** Everything?

**Craig:** Everything. You can destroy anything, right down to the signs on the walls. Unlike *Duke*, we have somewhere in the region of 30 different chip types. Burning wood, regular wood, metal, rocks, plants. Pretty much everything can be destroyed and pretty much everything has its own individual look when it gets wrecked.

**PCZ:** Are you going for interactive elements à la *Strife*?

**Nick:** There's no talking. There are no allies. However, there



## ACTIVATING JOHN WOO MODE



(Above) The infinitely dispensable mimes are fried alive.  
(Right) "You've been watching too much telly mate!"

are innocents. You can destroy them all. We have mime artists. I don't know what it's like in the UK, but everyone here hates them. So it's okay to kill them. There's a carnival level where they all hang out. You can kill them without any pay back.

**Craig:** They're fodder.

**Nick:** Yeah, they're fodder.

**PCZ:** What about all those interactive scenery doobies which make *Duke* so popular?

**Craig:** Well, there's a mine level with a cart you can ride in. Another one's a train level – you're literally on a moving train.

**Nick:** There's a lot more character voice and interacting with items.

**Craig:** There's a pretty solid puzzle element and lots of *Indiana Jones*-style traps.

**PCZ:** So far so good but, as we all know, a 3D shooter rises or falls by the quality of its ordnance. *Blood's* weapons better be good.

**Nick:** They are. You start with a pitchfork. It's good against some monsters, not so against others. Oh, but it's very good against other players in deathmatch. Then you get a flare pistol – single-fire flares which will stick into an opponent and burn them until it goes out. You can hit them with

several or plant them in different places. Some weapons have alternate modes of firing. The flare gun fires eight flares simultaneously in a starburst pattern.

**Craig:** You've got dynamite as well.

**Nick:** Yeah, bundles of TNT. You can throw it, or you can light it and drop it. So you can run around dropping lit TNT as you go. It works really well.

**Craig:** Then there's the shotgun. Single or double-barrel. It certainly has the true deathmatch feel of *Doom 2* compared to the impotent *Duke Nukem* shotgun.

**Nick:** And, more importantly, the impotent *Quake* shotgun. You might as well be thumbing your nose at a player, it would do more damage.

**Jason:** We like both of those games. But it's nothing compared to *Doom 2*. You don't get the deathmatch speed.

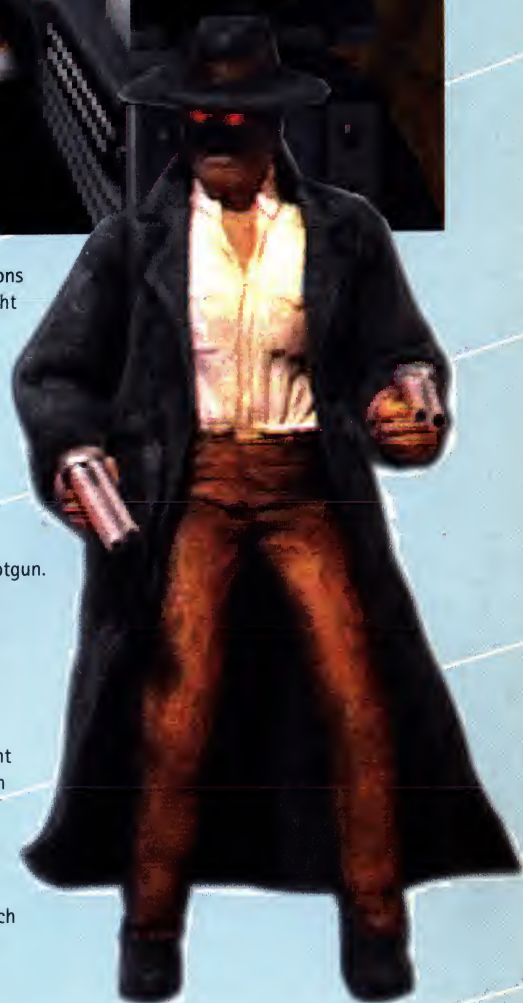
**PCZ:** What other weaps you got?

**Nick:** There's a Tommy gun. It has a rapid fire, straight ahead shot and also a spread where it strafes the gun back and forth. And then there's the incinerator or napalm cannon. It fires large fireballs.

**PCZ:** You guys keep going on about *Doom* deathmatch. You going to have a BFG in *Blood*?

**Nick:** We have some weapons in the reg version which are comparable in power and complexity to the BFG. Namely, the voodoo doll.

**PCZ:** Voodoo doll? How does that work?







One of *Blood*'s major innovations is the use of 'voxels'. You don't know what a voxel is? Phone Nick Newhard, designer on *Blood*: "Well, in computer 3D terminology they're called 'volumetric pixels', or voxels. In *Blood* you can view items such as weapons from any angle – including above – and you see the true angle. They're 3D sprites, if you like, as opposed to single-sided sprites."



Can the voodoo doll really be the answer to the BFG?

**Jason:** It's cool. It works on line of sight. You pick it up and then you'll just start stabbing the doll and you'll be looking at the person way off down the hall or something. They'll go blind. Their screen goes black.

**Nick:** There are different effects depending on where you hit it.

**Jason:** Yeah, so if you hit them in the eye, the player goes blind. Also there's one when you hit them in the... ah... special spot. It does double the damage. The shoulder one makes the weapon drop. So it's really cool when somebody's shooting you with the shotgun and you're stabbing the doll. They're dropping their gun, going blind, running in circles. It's really funny.

**PCZ:** And you're using all these cool weapons against what exactly?

**Nick:** You have rats and bats – but they're mainly nuisance creatures. You've got other cultists – armed with Tommy guns and shotguns. Zombies, gargoyles. Er, there are bone eels underwater. In the registered version there's The GillBeast Creature – a very large human piranha, gaping mouth, loads of teeth. Like The Creature from the Blue Lagoon.

**PCZ:** But is the AI better than *Doom* or *Duke's*?

**Nick:** The AI is a lot faster than *Doom* or *Duke's*. In those games the monsters tended to walk back and forth in your general direction. In *Nukem* they got better, they would come at you. In *Blood* the monsters are rapid – they find you quickly – they come at you as fast as they can.

**Craig:** And they dodge.

**Nick:** Yeah, they dodge.

**Jason:** The best thing about the monsters in *Blood* is that everyone has the capability of killing you. None of them are a joke.

**PCZ:** What else is in *Blood* that isn't in *Duke*?

**Nick:** Our crouching is different and better. You're a smaller target.

**Craig:** Yeah, but it's more than that. We have true hit location for our characters.

**PCZ:** True hit quoi?

**Nick:** If you shoot somebody under the arm the animation frame is such that the shot should pass under it – it'll go underneath it, and not hit the player.

**Craig:** When you shoot a tree you'll actually see the impact.

Not just on it.

Hit location is completely different to something like *Shadow Warrior* or *Quake*. Especially with the shotgun.

**PCZ:** Interesting... anything else?

**Nick:** In the registered version we'll have a blood-lust mode. After killing a succession of enemies your blood-lust meter will rise and as soon as it reaches a certain point, it will actually transmogrify into a beast-like creature which can take far more damage. At that point,



Guess who's been to Calais and bought some bangers?

you become a close-combat melee creature. Temporarily. Blood-lust will drop and you'll warp back into a human again. But if you keep killing people...

**Craig:** So if one player reaches that stage in a multi-player game with a load of people, everyone will stop and try to take him out, because he will have become so powerful and won't stop killing people. Or everyone will run and hide.

**Nick:** A bit like *Quake's* QuadDamage mode. Ducking and jumping is better in *Blood*. You can duck behind things, jump over things... you have the feel of being in an action film. Especially in multi-player mode, ducking behind counters and tombstones.

**Craig:** Especially with guns akimbo – you begin to feel like you're in a John Woo film.

**Nick:** Leaping out of windows, turning in mid-air and firing a rocket (as you're ducking).

**PCZ:** So what's going to be different about your deathmatch?

**Jason:** Bloodbath. Not deathmatch.

**PCZ:** Oh apologies. *Bloodbath*?

**Jason:** Ours is going to recreate the feel of *Doom 2* deathmatch.

**Craig:** You play a lot of 3D games these days and the rocket launcher is the be-all and end-all. Same thing with *Quake*. In *Blood* players pretty much use all the weapons. Each one has a use: the shotgun's very effective at medium and short ranges, and the Tommy gun's very good at long range. The rocket launcher's great for getting loads of kills and overpowering people. No weapon is underpowered so that one can be all-powerful.

**Jason:** We played them all until we got a really good balance.

**Nick:** Yeah, and we're going to have loads of configurable options in deathmatch. Respawnning all that stuff. Plus a *Blood Soccer* match where you kick a head about, and *BloodFeuds*, which is kinda like Capture The Flag.

**Jason:** You'll also be able to choose to respawn furthest away from an opponent or closest to a weapon.

**PCZ:** Okay, okay, okay. You guys obviously have loads of great ideas. But you're using the Build engine. Now, in the post-*Quake* universe, don't you think that it's a bit old-fashioned?

**Nick:** Yeah, okay agreed. There's a presentation issue there. Obviously we're using an older engine. But what you really have to remember here is that we're actually concentrating on story and gameplay rather than on the engine we're using.

**Jason:** Besides, it's an advanced version of that engine, and we can blow everything up. Unlike *Duke*, we can have rooms above rooms and bridges.

**Nick:** Basically *Blood* is really enjoyable, really playable. It's a great single-player game, and a great multi-player game as well. I mean, given that, what more could you possibly want?

**PCZ:** Large pots of cash and an island?

**Nick:** There is that. **Z**



## Product details

**Developer:** Monolith

**Publisher:** EIDOS Interactive

**Websites:** www.blood.com and www.lith.com

**Release Date:** June



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# MAGESLAYER

**When not mouse-clicking their fingers down to the cartilage completing *Hexen 2*, our friends at Raven Software are busy on their next project – a top-down spell 'em up. David McCandless casts a 'Magic Eye' spell.**

**R**EADY YOURSELF. AN EPIC STORYLINE doth approach... It was a depressing month by all accounts for the Ancient Lands. Mages In Gowns had lost the cup to second division Forest Elves In Bodkins.

The fit bird had left the local on-going mystery play – Broo'Ksi-de: The Close ("a story of everyday cross-bred villagers"). And – woodentyaknowit – the entire civilisation of the world was wiped out by 'StarFall', 40 days and nights of meteorite bombardment. Doh.

So, basically, loads of people got killed, and even those who survived found themselves dying horribly in the irradiated ruins of their former cities, surrounded by eerie glowing 'StarStones'. As centuries passed, and men coupled with women (bonking incessantly in fact to rebuild human-kind), wise men gathered these magical rocks and slowly

worked out how to harness their power. After a couple of disasters (a couple of accidental earthquakes, one or two thermonuclear explosions – that kind of thing), some clever bod finally made a SunOrb, a big shiny grapefruit type device made of crushed StarStone. Then somebody else managed to melt the rocks into artefacts, so more precise trickery and spellcasting was possible. And then finally, a few wizards working in concert or 'clans' forged seven all-singing, all-dancing, all-powerful super-relics. But, of course, there were some baddies who wanted a bit of relic action. So a big scrap occurred. The evil LoreThanes on one side, the shiny Mageslayers on the other.

## Fight! Fight! Fight! Etc

So after much argy-bargy and fisticuffs, the Mageslayers were triumphant, having kicked the LoreThanes' arses. Peace reigned. The fit bird got her own show. Everyone was happy. Oh, except that there's a gathering darkness enveloping the world and the cataclysmic conflict with the LoreThanes will seem like a minor skirmish compared to the years of evil and torture and agony which are approaching...

So, basically, you are a Mageslayer. A rough, tough ninja with spells instead of shurikens and a bodkin instead of an all-in-one black leotard. Just for reference, Mageslayers are expected to hold their breath for four minutes; scale sheer rock cliffs; be deadly in the art of sword, poisons, bow and hand; heal and cast spells and magic. Your quest: to recover all seven ninjascope relics and kick big nasty baddy butt.

As you've probably gathered, *Mageslayer* uses what we professionals call 'a Gauntlet metaphor', after the immensely

Few people will fail to be captivated by *Mageslayer's* graphical lushness. From what we've seen, Raven Software have kept it fast too.





Although it will sport RPG elements, Raven maintain that *Mageslayer* will be very similar to *Quake* in terms of feel and pace. We can't wait.

If you're one of the few to have a 3Dfx or Matrox board in your machine, you'll be treated to gorgeous 16-bit colour visuals.

popular, immensely old top-down Tolkien 'em up of the same name. Steve Raffle, president of Raven Software agrees: "Yeah, we wanted to try something a little different from first-person games but still keep that level of action. We figured it would be cool if you could see your player and what sort of spells you were shooting out, and kind of get a feel for everything that is happening around you."

Raven Software you may remember from such games as *ShadowCaster*, *Heretic*, *Hexen*, and their age-old Amiga classic, *Dark Crypt*. Examining their discography, you can see a pattern emerging: Fantasy. Codpieces. Helmets. Dwarves. Leather Armour. Broadswords. Anvils. Ahem. Yes, that's right. They're all healthy young men with an interest in role-playing games. (*That'll do - PC Zone Lawyer*)

*Mageslayer* is no exception. For starters, you can choose from four character classes. Worlock are fairly run of the mill magic users with all-round competence in most disciplines. Earth Lords are stout dwarfish fellows (with hammers, natch) with nice, earthy spells, while Arch Demons are masters of fire - fireballs, firewhips, Catherine Wheels, you name it - and look like demons. Or you can opt to be an Inquisitor, a rather strange monicker for someone who is basically undead but can summon ghosts and other spirit entities.

A *Mageslayer*'s *puissance* - if I may use such a word - is determined by three stats: health, speed and toughness, each of which can be beefed up through experience and the wholesale slaughter of monsties. The Nasties sound unoriginal, but could be fun. They include giant spiders in tombs, hideous wererats in sewers, and ugly trolls underground. To ensure maximum destruction, each character has a separate range of spells - all of which have individual pyrotechnic and particle effects viewable in the wide-angle bird's-eye view.

The Flame Sphere, for example, fires a barrage of orange globules trailing wispy, transparent smoke. Nice. Force Blast releases a transparent morphing energy bolt which pinballs erratically before settling on a direct and deadly path to its target. Cool. Fans of *Return Of The Jedi* will no doubt like the Lightning Arc which throws chains of deadly EmperorBolts™ over one's opponents. Neat. And then there's the awesome Doom Strike which summons fire from heaven in a column of ferocious yellow energy particles.

## Ivor The Engine

All these hyper-kinetic visuals and rather good-looking screenshots are only possible through Raven Software's new 2D/3D engine. It works as a kind of melding between the *Quake* engine and a more traditional sprite-based front-end. It has dynamic shadows and glorious, depth-increasing dappling effects ("The lighting effects are actually very *Quake*-like," says Raffle), plus texture-mapped effects, and different heights to the scenery.

Hardware acceleration doesn't usually mean squat to a 2D game, but Raffle insists there will be an advantage. "The base version of *Mageslayer* will run in 8-bit colour but a Direct3D version will use 16-bit. We also hope to support Matrox and 3Dfx boards."

And, as you'd expect from a house which has licensed both the *Doom* and *Quake* engines, *Mageslayer* has a healthy streak of multi-player potential in Internet and IPX LAN

**"The fast action, arcadey feel should appeal to Doom and Quake players"**  
**Simon Raffle, President Raven Software**

flavours. Deathmatch and co-operative modes will be supported, as well as Capture The Flag and King Of The Hill novelty games. Raven Software also hope to implement a 'competition' option, where plural players race to find certain artefacts and complete the level.

A final word from Raffle: "We're going for a fast action, arcadey feel, which will appeal to *Doom* and *Quake* players." Well, we put our heads together here at *PC Zone* and we reckon it's been a while since we've had the pleasure of a really good *Gauntlet* clone. And all this 3D first-person shoot 'em upping is getting a little bit bland. This being the case, we thought we'd include a congratulatory message for Raven Software - good on ya (but er, next time guys, how about less of the ah, dwarves and anvils?).

## Product details

Developer: Raven Software

Publisher: GT Interactive

Website: <http://204.246.1.60>

Release Date: TBC





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# PROJECT X

**Paul Presley** visited developers Probe to check out their new 3D blaster (formerly known as *Condemned*). It's now known internally as 'Project X', and it's shaping up to be the best game they've ever made...

P

ROBE SOFTWARE HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE for a more than a few games during their 12 years in the business, but none have been as technically advanced as this forthcoming Descent-style action blaster. Like *Terrace* which we previewed a couple of months ago, 'Project X' is an absolutely stunning game to look at, making fuller than full use of Microsoft's Direct3D software and supporting every 3D accelerator card known to man.



## What's in a name?

Adrenaline. Rush. Damnation. Condemnation. Aftermath. No, I haven't swallowed a Thesaurus – these are just some of the names that have been rejected by Probe and Acclaim so far.

The main problem is that the name of choice – *Condemned* – is too similar to a forthcoming Microsoft game called *The Condemned* (can't see it myself). Bill Gates' army of darkness (nee: legal department) have put the kibosh on Acclaim using it sans definitive article and so at the time of writing, Probe are busily scratching their heads trying to think of something else.

"*Forsaken* was one idea, although everyone said that it sounded like a cowboy movie," sighs Tony. "*Damnation* got knocked back on religious grounds. *Plummet*... *DescentPlummet*, geddit? *Beyond* reminded everyone of an '80s software house. It seems like every time we come up with a name, we have to wait a month for the lawyers to come back and say, 'Sorry, you can't use it.'"

If anyone out there has any good ideas, Probe would like to hear from you.



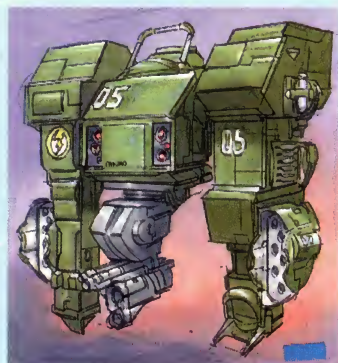
**'Project X' is an absolutely stunning game to look at, making fuller than full use of Microsoft's Direct3D software and supporting every 3D accelerator card known to man.**

'Project X', basically, is a *Descent*-style shoot 'em up. Scavengers fly around disused (or condemned) planets, trying to find anything of worth, but mainly trying to kill any other scavengers that appear. "The project started when we played *Descent*," says project manager Tony Beckwith with a grin as we step out into the main office. "We simply thought we could do it a lot better."

The first thing I notice is that just about everyone in the place is deeply absorbed in a multi-player battle of 'Project X'. The cynic in me might say that this was just too timely a coincidence and they were all told to start playing it when I stepped into the lift in the foyer. Thing is, they all seem oblivious to my presence and have that look of total absorption that you see in multi-player *Quake* sessions. When I ask one of the designers if he could show me some of the other levels, I hear cries of dismay as the game is stopped to load in a different map.

## "I design guns for a living"

"Do you remember *SWIV*?" Tony asks me as we approach a desk covered in *Star Wars* models and topped by a large alien pod that looks ready to explode. "Ned was the graphic artist on that," he says, introducing me to a man doing an uncanny



As much detail as possible from the initial artwork for each object has been retained.





The bikes and bikers all have distinct personalities, and slightly dubious names such as Jap-Bird, Borg-Chic and Foetoid.  
(Main picture) Some of the different bikers available. Of course, this sort of pose would *never* happen in a real game.



impression of 'Q' from James Bond. "He's got better though," shouts someone at the back. As if to illustrate the point the screen shows off one of the enemy tanks from 'Project X' complete with an SW4 unit number painted on its side.

The rate at which computer game graphics have progressed over the last few years has never failed to impress me, but just recently the standards are being reset almost every week. 'Project X' is just the latest game to feature objects that are every bit as detailed as the initial concept drawings, sometimes even more so. Ned takes me through a procession of tanks, robots, guns and other ships, none of which would look out of place in an introductory FMV sequence and all of which move like greased lightning in the actual game. Every object has dozens of movable parts, swivelling turrets and unfolding limbs and each is festooned with light sources.

We hit a stumbling block when Tony asks if we can take a look at any non-military items from the game. Everyone goes quiet. Finally, someone suggests taking a look at the texture-maps and we're back in action. Detailed backdrops and wall textures flick on and off the screen, showing just how advanced graphic routines have come since games like *Doom* and *Ultima Underworld* first launched the concept of non-flick-screen first-person perspective games on us. As we take our leave of the graphics department I hear Ned shouting, "Sod it, I've forgotten to paint graffiti on the solar generator." I don't know why, but it's one of those quotes that you just wouldn't hear in any other business.

## Spot the difference

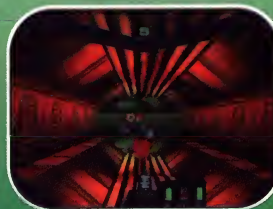
Remember those scientists that recently cloned a sheep? Perhaps this sinister technology is already at work in the games world...

Not genre clones. Hell, they've been around since *Ms Pac-Man* sashayed her feminist nonsense into the world. It's worse than that. With the advent of Mr Gates' Direct3D malarkey, I've started to notice that almost every game being written for it is

looking identical – look at the screenshots of 'Project X' and compare them to the ones of *Terracide* and *Tunnel B1* (below). Okay, the objects look a bit different, but examine all the 'effects': real-time light-sourcing, lens flares, particle doobries, texture-wotsits. We had some of these before D3D, but because the routines were programmed individually they all had

distinctions. Now everything uses the same architecture and they all look pretty damn similar.

I'm worried that soon all games will look the same (they already play the same). It's the computer game equivalent of plastic surgery – 50 year old gameplay wrapped up to look like a 20 year old bimbo. I've seen the future, and it's littered with lens flares. Beware...





## They're talking another language!

"Brother's on y'aw ass, maaan." "Who you be calling a fool, fool?" Try to imagine Samuel L Jackson in *Pulp Fiction* mode while reading the above and you'll get an idea of what I was hearing after Tony suggested we had a listen to some of the sound effects they were preparing for use. Each character in 'Project X' has a range of speech samples that get played at appropriate junctures in the game and are being recorded just up the road in California, by the same team that provided vocal and sound effects for such classics as *Command & Conquer*.

The big contention at the moment though is with one of the lines spoken by the 'cool' black dude character, Earl Slick. You see it uses... *that* word. You know the one I mean. Starts with an 'n'. The argument for using it is that African Americans (if we want to get correct about it) tend to use the term among themselves in a non-derogatory manner all the time and since Slick is 'from da hood', it's a natural and realistic portrayal of such a character. The argument against is that Acclaim want to be able to pitch the game to as wide an audience as possible (read: family) and would rather avoid having to diffuse any potential timebombs that would be more than likely to crop up down the line. It's the kind of argument you could imagine Quentin Tarantino having were he a games designer.

(Right) Tony Beckwith, project leader, working on his Liam Gallagher impersonation.

(Below) Programmer Ian and friend take time off the game to design a larger office space.



Yes, it is vaguely phallic. Live with it.



However, seeing as Quentin isn't actually a games designer, and corporate might being what it is, it doesn't look as though the word in question will stay. In the meantime it does mean that Probe have an office filled with white guys strolling around saying things like, "Shiiiiit blood," and "Yo, wassup?" in overly exaggerated Superfly voices while making distended pointy gestures with their hands. It all seems ludicrously out of context, especially when you consider that we're in the depths of East Croydon – but like I said, they're a weird bunch.

## Loaded up and truckin'

There's still a fairly long way to go for 'Project X' and Probe have to contend with the potential double whammy of both *Terracide* and *Descent 3* (the former's likely to appear quite a while before Acclaim's expected end of year release date). The main disadvantage in this is that if the other two prove particularly popular (and *Descent* does have a pretty good pedigree in this respect), 'Project X' might come off looking like a Johnny-come-lately. The advantage is that Probe will have time to analyse the weaknesses of the rival games and make any necessary improvements. Plus with technology constantly racing forward, they'll be ideally placed to take advantage of any new developments that occur along the way.

'Project X' vs *Terracide*? Oh god, get ready – it looks like *Duke Nukem* vs *Quake* all over again. **U**

## Product details

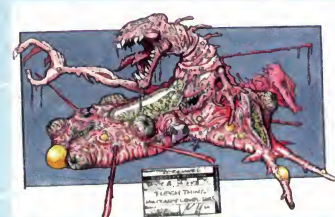
Developer: Probe Software

Publisher: Acclaim

Telephone: 0171 344 5000

Release date: End of the year

Website: [www.probe.co.uk](http://www.probe.co.uk)



(Clockwise from above left) One of the better weapons is a huge cutting laser.

You can call up on-board cameras within the game, displaying missile views, rear views and so on.

Not every bad guy is robotic in nature. How well these 'organic' slimeballs will shape up is anyone's guess, but Probe are confident.

Different levels include an ancient Aztec-style temple, biodomes (à la *Silent Running*), nuclear reactors and other urbanised hell-holes.

## Are these walls moving?

To stay ahead of their rivals, the Probe team is making sure that 'Project X' is more than just a fancy set of graphic routines. Tony is enthusiastic as he describes all sorts of gameplay aspects – nothing major, just different touches that constantly remind you how innovative the game really is. One of them's so good I can't believe no one has thought of it before.

"One thing we want to put in are multi-player levels that get bigger the more players enter them," he explains. "We thought it would be a good idea because there's no point having a great big map made for eight people when you've only got two players inside. So we'll close off some doors and others won't open until more players join in."

Like I said, it's little ideas like this that just serve to enhance the overall sense of thought and care taken in producing the game.





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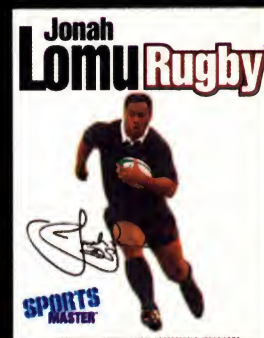
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# LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2







(Left) With a heavy sigh, Twinsen was forced to concede that – wait a sodding minute – is that Bert and Ernie I can see?

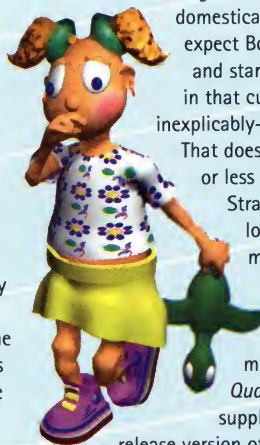
In which **Charlie Brooker** has a gander at the sequel to one of his favourite-ever PC games... and is so impressed, he fills his pants avec les grande lumpes de merde.



something of a Twinsunian hero since he overthrew Dr Funrock, the crazed dictator who was ruling the roost in *LBA Numero One-o*. Revolutionary spunkiness aside, Twinsen's a fertile little so and so, as the bulbous abdomen of his beloved wife Zoe makes clear – she's expecting their first child. When the game opens, the loving couple are relaxing at home. He's doing a spot of decorating, she's pottering around, doing breathing exercises and generally 'being pregnant'. It's all so thrillingly domesticated, yet simultaneously urbane, you half expect Bob Hoskins to suddenly wander on-set and start harping on about the telephone bill, in that curious cheery-cockney-geezer-who-inexplicably-never-uses-the-'f-word' manner of his. That doesn't happen. Indeed, to start with, more or less nothing happens. But don't be fooled. Strange doings are afoot. For despite the low-key opening, *LBA2* is one of the most imaginative games of the year...

### Language, Timothy

In an act of geekoid prick-teasing matched only by id's infamous 'Qtest' *Quake* deathmatch beta release, EA supplied me with a fully-playable, pre-release version of *LBA2* which was approximately 95% complete. Well, '95% complete', that is, if you care to overlook two minor details: 1) the voiceovers



### So what else is new?

Jaw-dropping visual enhancements aside, *LBA Numero Two-o* features all kinds of other improvements over *LBA Numero One-o*. Here are just five of them...

1. Twinsen now has two different jumps – at last he can jump while running.
2. Better yet, he doesn't lose life points if he runs into a wall (an infuriating 'feature' in *LBA 1*).
3. You can save at any point in the game (the original limited you to certain 'savepoints').
4. The game is far larger – approximately 2 Ω times larger, if you must know.
5. It's probably got improved AI as well. And if you put 'AI' into 'LBA', you get the word 'LABIA'. Hurr, hurr.

### Product details

Developer: Adeline  
Publisher: Electronic Arts  
Website: <http://www.ea.com>  
Release Date: TBC



With a heavy sigh, Twinsen was forced to concede that he didn't really know what the feck was going on in this screenshot.



With a heavy sigh, Twinsen was forced to concede that his new vehicle, while undeniably superb at shuttling from A to B, could hardly be considered a 'fanny magnet'.



**L**ITTLE BIG ADVENTURE – ONE OF THE neatest games you ever did see – has spawned a sequel. Fittingly, it's called *Little Big Adventure 2*, and if it doesn't turn out to be one of the best games of '97, I'll eat my hat, then regurgitate the remains and eat it a second time. Because judging by what I've seen (and played), it's going to be magnificent – an arcade adventure of rare calibre.

The action takes place upon a superbly-realised fantasy world. If God had dropped acid (just say no, kids) while creating our planet Earth, it could have turned out like the planet Twinsun: brightly-coloured, populated by Quetches (basically humanoid, fondness for ponytails), Grobos (cute li'l elephants), Rabibunies (physique of Nicholas Lyndhurst, head of Hartley Hare), and Spheros (short, fat and round, but cheerful nonetheless). It's a charming place to live and doubtless an ideal holiday location too.

You play the role of Twinsen, a Quetch whose moniker is irritatingly similar to that of the planet he inhabits. Twinsen's



Think making games this complex is simple? Then you're a plonker.





The characters may look quite simple close-up, but when you see them in motion you'll be utterly blown away.

aliens hailing from Planet Zeelich. Upon touchdown they're all smiles, handshakes and "we come in peace", but let's face it – they ain't fooling no one.

Sure enough, it soon transpires that they're hatching a plot to cause a collision between Twinsun and the nearby Emerald Moon, in order to split the planet asunder and get their filthy alien mitts on the magic power lurking within. The swines. Naturally, it's all down to Twinsen (ie you) to sort the whole sorry mess out – and as anyone who has played the first *LBA* can testify, it's likely to be a mammoth under-taking. And indeed, a second glance at the press release reveals that the game features 'around 220 locations, distributed on three planets'. Not the sort of thing you knock off during a lunch break, then.

## The English, Patient?

Thoughtfully, EA also supplied some savegames, so that I could trespass my way into some of the later stages. I say 'some' savegames – in fact there were 90 of the things, spaced widely apart and spanning the entire game from the opening scene right up to "Le Conflict Final". Having dipped into several of them at random, it's clear that *LBA2* isn't just huge, it's also hugely entertaining. From sand-dune buggy races, to low-gravity moon exploration, Twinsen is set to encounter far more variety than he did on his last excursion. Within 20 minutes of savegame exploration, I'd seen more bizarre and unusual things than I did the last time I went abroad. Considering I stayed next to Amsterdam's red-light district, that's quite an achievement.

What we have here is a videogame that positively overflows with invention, warm-hearted quirkiness, even –

**The aliens are all smiles, handshakes and "we come in peace", but let's face it, they ain't fooling no one.**

and I mean this – effortless beauty. The graphics are crisp, clear and uncluttered (somehow they remind me of the old *Tintin* comic stories), the animation exemplary (when you can tell a lot about a character simply by the way he moves, it speaks volumes about the skill of the animator). It all looks so enticing, so captivating and enchanting, that I can't wait to get my hands upon the final – English language – version. I want it. I want it bad. 7

## The little engine that could

Whereas the original *LBA* stuck assiduously to a fixed isometric viewpoint, the sequel ups the ante somewhat by turning all the outdoor locations into real-time 3D landscapes which look just as good as their pre-rendered counterparts. The player can switch from one fixed-position 'camera' to another at the touch of a button, or move the viewpoint in a 'freeform' manner to whichever position he chooses, in order to get a better look at the action (you can imagine it being de rigueur in interactive porn films come the next century). It's a bit like *Alone In The Dark* with a larger film crew. And much better graphics. In fact, it's stunning.

Whenever Twinsen nips indoors, the engine reverts to isometric rigidity. Since the majority of the internal locations are basically gigantic obstacle courses (which tax your intellect as much as your dexterity), this makes perfect sense – it forces you to concentrate on the problem at hand. The two different styles are interwoven so seamlessly it's hard to spot the transition from one to another. Smart.

So, will you need a Cray supercomputer to actually run the damn thing? Er, no. EA are keen to stress that, upon boot-up, the game has a good nose around your system in order to determine just how weedy or powerful it is, then adjusts the quality of animation accordingly. The claim is that this enables *LBA2* to run on anything from a DX266 upward, although I'll believe it when I see it. It certainly ran like a dream on a P133 – a lucid, fairytale dream at that.



With a heavy sigh, Twinsen was forced to concede that going for the 'underground grotto' look was a mistake.



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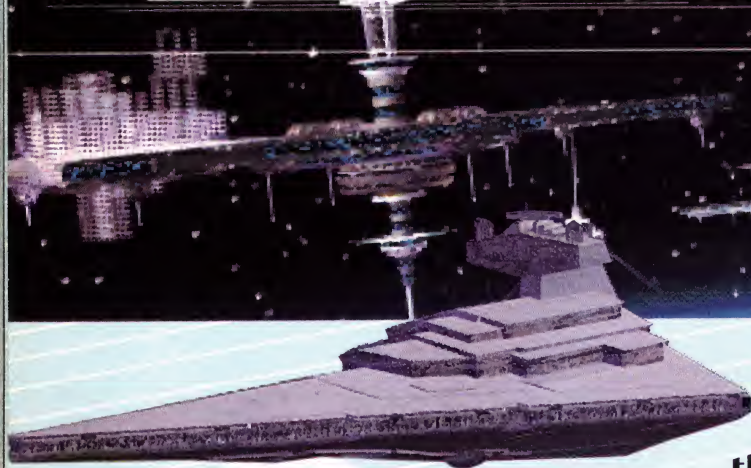
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# STAR WARS: SUPREMACY



The sun is shining, the birds are singing and there's not a cloud in the sky. Oh what a lovely world. Either **Jeremy Wells** is in love again or LucasArts are working on a strategy game set within the *Star Wars* universe. Either way, he doesn't normally look this happy on a Monday morning.



NOT CONTENT WITH LEADING THE FIELD in space combat sims, first-person shoot 'em ups and point-and-click adventures, LucasArts have finally made the decision to break into the strategy market and produce the game every *Star Wars* fan has been dying to play. A game that will

for the very first time place them in the role of supreme strategic commander with all of the resources, planets and forces of the Galactic Empire or Rebel Alliance at their disposal.

Set just after *Star Wars: A New Hope* and before *Empire*, for the first time ever in a *Star Wars* game, players will be able to take control of actual characters from the films and send them on specific missions. They'll also be able to control massive fleets and generally act like they rule the universe (which is, after all, the point of the game).

Initial rumours suggested that *Supremacy* would be just like *C&C*, only set in the *Star Wars* universe. The rumour-mongers couldn't have got it more wrong. It's nothing like *C&C*. Think more along the lines of *Ascendancy* and *Master Of Orion 2* and you'd be much closer to the mark. "It would have been a pretty simple project to do," comments Product Manager Tom Byron, "but we wanted to create a game with more depth to it. Something that *Star Wars* fans could really get their teeth into. There are enough *Command & Conquer* clones out there already - we wanted to do something a bit different. Something on a much bigger scale altogether."

## Across the Galaxy

*Supremacy* is indeed a massive game, set in a *Star Wars* universe populated with up to 200 planets, each with their own particular balance of resources and political alliances, stretching from the icy planet Hoth to the Imperial Seat at Coruscant. Although the game is open-ended and there's no campaign in the normal sense, the player is given three set victory conditions which they must achieve, while the ultimate aim of the game is to amass enough power and resources to achieve these goals. To win, the Empire must capture Luke and Mon Mothma and destroy the Rebel base, whereas the Alliance have to capture Darth Vader, the Emperor and take the Imperial capital at Coruscant. The fact that all three victory conditions must be satisfied simultaneously means that there'll no doubt be plenty of opportunity for counter-attacks and victory steals, a feature that will figure largely in two-player head-to-head mode.

When the game starts, the player will already have a limited number of worlds under their control and depending on which side is chosen, they'll have a number of quite different resources and personnel at their disposal. The Empire might start out with a much wider power base that outnumbers the Rebels' (just like in the films), but the Rebel headquarters are more elusive because they're mobile, and therefore harder to track down. Similarly, the Rebels might have less planets under their control, but they are generally more loyal, while those operating under the banner of the Empire will be less loyal and productive. As a result, there's plenty to think about before you even start. Do you opt for the might of the Imperial Forces, or rely on the stealth and limited resources of the Rebels? Whatever you decide, it's not going to be easy.



The game will also feature a rather impressive encyclopaedia of units you can peruse at any time. Smart.



Rebel commanders will be kept up to date with galaxy goings-on via the helpful C3P0 and R2D2.





*Supremacy* is actually being developed out-of-house by a recently formed third-party developer called Cool Hand Interactive made up largely of ex-Three-Sixty Pacific people (the company behind the *Harpoon* series of naval strategy games). They've been working on *Supremacy* for almost two years now, and their strategy roots can be clearly seen throughout the game. Again, people expecting a massive combat-fest will be in for a bit of a surprise. Before players even think about engaging in any real-time face-offs, they will have to spend time exploring the galaxy, looking for resources, making new alliances, strengthening old ones and fortifying their fleet. Each planet has its own raw and refined materials that the player must use to build starships and troops and successfully managing these resources will be a crucial factor in how the game progresses, as will the loyalty of a planet and its people.

In an effort to keep it relatively simple and to cut down on the mundane management elements that plague so many games of this ilk, Cool Hand have toned down the resource management side of things by making all the planetary resources go into a central pool that the player can draw on. Consequently, the strategy is more focused on what you build, where you build it and how you use it rather than keeping a constant eye on endless stats.

## Calling all units

It almost goes without saying that most *Star Wars* fans will be totally familiar with the combat units in the game. Players will be able to produce X-Wings, TIE Fighters, Storm Troopers, Star Destroyers, Blockade Runners, Calamari Cruisers – the Empire will even be able to build Death Stars (once they've got enough resources) – and then send their huge fleets to patrol the galaxy or protect a specific planet. When two fleets meet, a space squirmish fought within the *Supremacy's* dedicated tactical battle module will ensue. Although battles are essentially fought in real-time, the real combat is largely determined by attack patterns and tactics preset by the player. If things start to go a bit pear-shaped then the player can intervene and give new orders, using the scaleable 3D module to help them suss out a chink in their opponent's armour. However, success in combat will ultimately lie in planning and devising a flexible battle plan that will be able to cope with a variety of different situations, rather than dexterity with the mouse.

Cool Hand are keen to stress that *Supremacy* is very much character-driven in that players can call on various familiar faces throughout the game to aid them with special assignments. For the first time ever in a game, players will be able to call on the individual skills of Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Darth Vader, Lando, Chewy, Boba Fett, Mon Mothma et al to



help them. Each character will have certain skills which will dramatically help increase the chances of a mission's success, but players must also consider that each character has a personality and motives of their own which must be accommodated. If Han is captured while on a mission, for example, Luke will demand to go and rescue him, just as he'll leave Rebel Command at some point in the game to go and train with Yoda on Dagobah. Lose your key personnel and you're in deep water, so whatever happens they must be protected at all costs.

## Do-gooding droids

To help keep things moving the player will be assisted by two droids. C3PO and R2D2 will keep Rebel commanders up to date on what's happening around the galaxy, while the less famous IMP22 and SP7 will keep the Imperial players posted. The aim here is to make the game as easy as possible to control, while at the same time packing in as many *Star Wars* characters and personalities as possible. This, coupled with the fact that the game interface is being built around Windows 95 control protocols will mean that anyone who can find their way around the average desktop will be able to play *Supremacy* without too much trouble, which is good news for people who aren't that familiar with strategy games but are seriously into *Star Wars*.

At the moment, the team are working on the multi-player side of things and at the same time tweaking the AI. Modem play, LAN and direct connect serial mode play modes will be supported, but only for two players (the logic being that there are only two sides to play) and LucasArts still haven't ruled out the possibility of Internet play.

From what we've seen, *Supremacy* could well establish LucasArts as a major force in yet another genre. If they apply the same production values to *Supremacy* that they have to the other titles set within the *Star Wars* universe, the real-time strategy scene will no doubt be in awe come the Autumn when the game is scheduled for release. **Z**



(Top) Planet loyalty will play an important part in the game, so players will have to keep a close eye on what's going on around the galaxy while they search for resources. (Above) Players will be able to build up massive fleets and devise complex tactical routines and formations before entering into the real-time combat arena.

## Product details

Developer: LucasArts

Publisher: VIE

Website: <http://www.lucasarts.com>

Release Date: September





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Developed by



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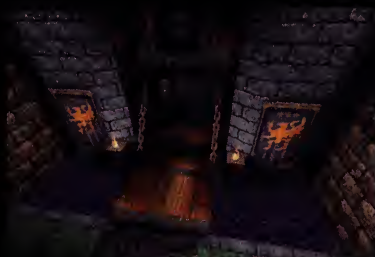
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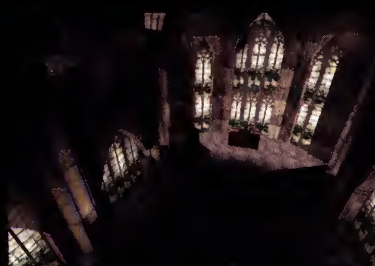
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*Pandemonium* may look like a straight 2D platformer from this screenshot, but Crystal Dynamics' Freestyle Camera gives the illusion of a 'proper' 3D environment.



# PANDEMONIUM

**Chris Anderson gets all hot under the collar checking out Crystal Dynamics' rather smart-looking new platform game. Oo-er...**



THE NAME CRYSTAL DYNAMICS PROBABLY won't ring any bells for most of you, seeing as how they haven't really done anything of significance on the PC since their excellent strategy game *The Horde* a couple of years ago. Indeed, there'll be many a raised eyebrow in the PC gaming community at the news that the company's next PC title is *Pandemonium*, a game which has recently sold in considerable volumes on the PlayStation and is bound to bring cries of 'PlayStation conversion alert' from all corners.

However, as Scott Steinberg, Vice President of Marketing at Crystal explains, these fears are entirely unfounded: "From the very beginning, we chose the PC as our main development environment. We created everything on the PC first and then moved to the PSX. Because of this, neither platform has had to suffer the familiar translation blues. We've spent plenty of time working on performance in order to allow the best gameplay on non-accelerated and slower PCs."

The game follows the exploits of Nikki and Fargus, and players decide at the beginning of a level which of the two they want to control. The characters have different skills (Nikki for example

can jump higher than Fargus) and certain levels can be very difficult if you don't choose the right character for the job. All the usual secret areas and power-ups you'd expect to find in any platform game worth its salt are present in *Pandemonium*, but the game also features morphing characters which change from the form of a bulldozing rhino to a fire-breathing dragon, among other things, to spice up the action.

## Freestyle frolics

While the game is essentially a 2D platformer, Crystal have used their revolutionary Freestyle 3D Camera Technology to 'fool' the player into thinking the game is 3D by changing view perspectives to give the impression of a very large and open environment. Scott is particularly proud of this: "Our goal from the very beginning was to take the known fun factor of a traditional action game and present it in a more cinematic and dramatic way. The action is framed perfectly to centre the character as well as give the player the best view of oncoming gameplay. To that end, we identified the camera perspective as the key to providing this enhanced experience. We also harnessed the skills of a cinematographer (by training) as a core designer on the team to ensure we got the desired effect."

You really do need to see this technology in action to fully appreciate it, but take it from me, it looks absolutely fantastic, especially if you've got a high-end accelerator card such as the 3Dfx or Apocalypse 3D, although Scott is keen to stress that Crystal haven't deserted gamers who have yet to purchase a 3D accelerator card: "*Pandemonium* will run fine on non-accelerated PCs, but we've spent a significant amount of time and effort tweaking the code to take full advantage of the 3Dfx chipset found in the higher performing accelerator cards. Crystal Dynamics firmly believe that the

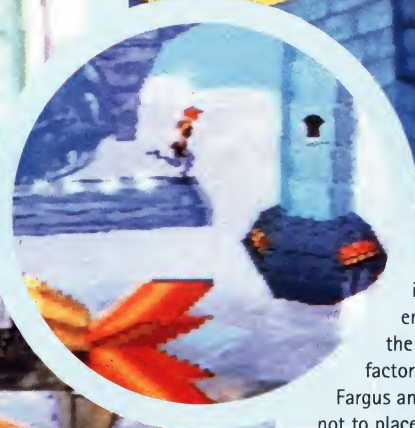


Both characters are gifted acrobats and both have different abilities - Nikki can jump high, while Fargus pounces about on his hands and feet.





The in-game camera follows the characters as they travel around the environment, leaving the player free to concentrate on the controls.



this concentration of effort since the story is not a crucial element to the complete enjoyment of the game. We enjoyed creating the game's story, and felt that it was an important factor in conveying the look and personalities of Nikki, Fargus and Sid (Sid is Fargus' puppet-on-a-stick), but tried not to place too much importance on it."

### Product details

Developer: Crystal Dynamics

Publisher: BMG Interactive

Website: <http://www.crystald.com>

Release Date: June

### Wrong platform?

Although *Pandemonium* is looking pretty fab on the PC even at this early stage, there'll still be cynics who maintain that platform games simply don't sell in the PC format. I suppose there's an element of truth in this, seeing as how most publishers have stopped producing platform games completely. I asked Scott why he thinks *Pandemonium* will repeat its PlayStation success on the PC: "I think PC gamers

***Certain levels can be difficult if you haven't chosen the right character as they both have different skills.***

***Pandemonium's wonderfully colourful environment is a significant improvement on the rather flat-looking platform games we're used to seeing on the PC. You'll see a big difference if you put a 3Dfx accelerator card in your machine – it'll look absolutely amazing.***


role of accelerator technology will continue to grow dramatically and allow publishers to do more exciting 3D products on the PC."

Too true. Of course, all action games, even platformers, have an accompanying plot to set the scene before the action begins. True to form, *Pandemonium* has a plot of its very own – but I'm not going to tell you what it is. Why not? Well, I'm keeping it to myself because *Pandemonium's* plot is so sugary-sweet and soppy that I'll feel like I'm reading a bedtime fairy-tale to a bunch of three year olds, and I'm not having any of that thank you very much.

To be fair, the plot isn't exactly vital to your overall enjoyment of this type of game, as Scott is quick to point out: "In *Pandemonium*, our focus was solely on gameplay and environment. We felt that players would appreciate

will want to experience *Pandemonium*; they'll see that it pushes the limits of the PC hardware with its rich 3D environments and very cool freestyle camera experience. This hasn't been done on the PC before, and presents an opportunity for gamers to see something creative and unique."

So what is the Scottmeister playing himself at the moment? *Super Mario 64*? *3D Lemmings*? Or perhaps he's found another platform title to satisfy his urge to bounce from one ledge to the next. Surprisingly, the answer is no: "*Masters Of Orion 2* is my favourite PC title at the moment, but our current direction has a completely different focus. *Legacy Of Kain*, which is almost at the opposite end of the gaming spectrum, is our next title. It's a gothic adventure game starring a reluctant and tortured hero: a vampire named Kain. You can expect other action and adventure products from Crystal Dynamics later in 1997."

*Master Of Orion 2*, eh? A man of taste indeed. For what it's worth, I've played the PSX version of *Pandemonium*, and it's fab. We expect the PC version to be even better, so tune in next month for a full review of the game in all its 3Dfx glory, along with an in-depth preview of *Legacy Of Kain*. 



# JONAH LOMU RUGBY



**Not many men can stand up to the rough, physical demands of Rugby Union – certainly not Paul Presley. He is used to being beaten up by large men with tattoos though, so who better to take a look at Codemasters' new sports game?**

**M**

Y OWN EXPERIENCES WITH RUGBY extend as far as a rainy afternoon on a school playing field covered with dog turds, desperately trying to avoid the ball that my psychopathic PE teacher insisted on throwing

at me. I knew that as soon as I took possession of the blasted thing I'd be set upon by everyone on the pitch, regardless of what team they were on, simply because they enjoyed having a fight. Tackles consisted of flying mock-karate kicks, headlocks, headbutts, knees to the stomach and the age-old favourite punch to the face.

## Who says I'm a wimp?

Don't get me wrong – I don't mind rugby, providing it's on telly. And on first impression, Rage Software have done a very credible job of taking what might seem like an unsimulatable game and, er, simulating it.

It looks a lot like the multitude of 3D motion captured football games around at the moment, only slightly more busy since most of the action consists of 30 or so players running towards a central point (usually you). The AI's been extensively worked on so that the computer-controlled players actually run about intelligently – providing blocking runs for you, forming running lines so that you can pass the ball about and so on. A welcome feature is that every player is given over 30 *Championship Manager* 2-style attributes, all of which are apparently as accurate as possible to their real-life counterparts and all of which affect how a player behaves on-screen.



## Product details

Developer: Rage Software

Publisher: Codemasters

Website: [www.codemasters.com](http://www.codemasters.com)

Release Date: Mid May

(Far left) Well it can't be *that* realistic then. Twenty seconds gone and Scotland aren't losing? (Left) Sanity takes a back seat as a game is played in MarioLand.

## Armchair rucking

You can elect to play international friendlies, custom tournaments, real-world Territory Cups and the full Rugby World Cup, as seen on ITV.

One of the most attractive options for real rugby fans though are the Historical Matches where you can jump into real-life key games at crucial moments to try and alter the outcome. How about taking control of the Welsh side when they were three tries down just seven minutes before the end of their classic encounter with Ireland for instance?

All in all, it seems that Rage are well on the way to achieving a top notch simulation of a sport that doesn't really get enough coverage in today's sports sim market. I for one am relieved that it's now possible for me to take part in a sport that I've avoided for years simply because the risk of personal injury has been too high. And you never know – if this trend continues we might see *Field Hockey Jam 97*, *International Superstar Lacrosse* and maybe even *Colin Palmer's Championship Crown Green Bowling* (he's very big, apparently). **Z**



(Above) And now you can take control of them and stuff it all up! (Top right) Two of the greats go head-to-head.

## And down under in Wogga Wogga...

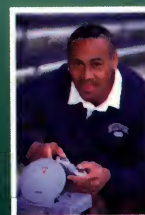
As well as the incalculable talents of 'stars' like Billy 'Jumpers' Beaumont and 'Hoots Mon' Bill McLaren providing in-game commentary, *Jonah Lomu Rugby* wouldn't be complete without the man himself, part-time rugby player and full-time man-mountain.

Play as or against the New Zealand squad and you'll see him. You can't miss him – he's twice as big as everyone else on the field, moves faster than a stampede of elephants and has about the same level of power.

Apparently the Rage team went all the way to New Zealand just to motion capture him, although how anyone could have the nerve to say, "Excuse me Jonah, we just want to stick these ping-pong balls onto you for a minute," is beyond me.



Bill McLaren tries to explain exactly what 'Up and Under' means.



Jonah proves he's so skilful he can use a PlayStation even though there's no CD in the machine and the power lead isn't plugged in. Gosh.



Exhumed

I AM THE WALKING DEAD  
UNVEILED I HUNT THE  
COME FORTH, BONE DOLLY  
I AM STRONG, I AM STRONG



94%  
SEGA  
SATURN  
MAGAZINE

95%  
MEAN  
MAGAZINE  
SEGA

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REST IN PIECES



# FEEBLE FILES

With 'Feeble' in the title, what else could we expect from **Paul Mallinson** other than a 'Feeble' attempt at an introductory paragraph?

A

DVENTURESOF'S COSY RURAL OFFICES, tucked away in a picturesque corner of Sutton Coldfield, are serenely quiet when I arrive for an early look at their latest creation, *Feeble Files*. But within minutes this silence is shattered when the room I'm sitting in rings loud to the strains of the well-known Beastie Boys hit *Sabotage*.

A licence for this seminal hip hop/punk masterpiece is currently being sought by the Adventuresoft legal department for use in the impressive intro sequence which opens *Feeble Files*. Here the music and special effect-laden visuals combine in a headlong rush through a startlingly busy asteroid belt at pace and with humour. I am impressed.

Over two long years in the making, *Feeble Files* is the brainchild of Simon Woodroffe (the instantly likeable and totally up-front son of adventuring legend Mike Woodroffe of Adventure International and *Simon The Sorcerer* fame) – a man currently attempting to combine two decades of adventuring experience with the latest in computer animation and digital audio techniques.

## Conform

The tale of amicable alien Feeble, a green lizard-like creature – portrayed vocally by *Red Dwarf*'s Robert Llewellyn – unfolds in a universe that appears to owe something of a nod in the



direction of Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* and George Orwell's *1984*. With a bit of *Spitting Image* thrown in for good measure.

Feeble's world is controlled by an unseen force called the Omnibrain, a ruler about whom very little is known. As the game points out early on: "All information about the Omnibrain is classified for your convenience. Gathering information about the Omnibrain is a violation of directive two-seven." So, being the persistent, dirt-digging alien you are, off you go to ask around and find out what the bloody hell is going on in this God-forsaken one-horse universe.

## Obey

Although *Feeble Files* displays a cheery exterior there are also darker, more subtle undertones running throughout the story, such as the entire populace being force-fed 'happy pills' to quell any subversive tendencies they may have.

"In this 'utopia' everyone takes 'chemical supplements' to keep themselves happy," says writer and project leader Simon Woodroffe. And he demonstrates this by taking his pointer-led character to the in-game one-stop drug shop. Was he expecting any criticism for this?

"Someone's bound to get pissed off about it, I'm sure. But we're not condoning that sort of thing – you're against this whole society for starters, and secondly, the game is set in a fantasy world – it's not here, it's not now. No one ever makes out that kids should be forced to take these things in the game. Admittedly, we were worried about it at first, but we decided to leave it in because George Orwell describes a similar sort of thing in *1984*. In the game, Feeble does take the drug in the beginning but when he stops taking it he becomes more inquisitive and the mysteries of the game begin to unravel – so it is relevant."

(Top) Because it's a completely alien universe it's only fair that there should be a built-in encyclopaedia of background information which increases in size as you progress – it proves an interesting, and lengthy, read in itself.

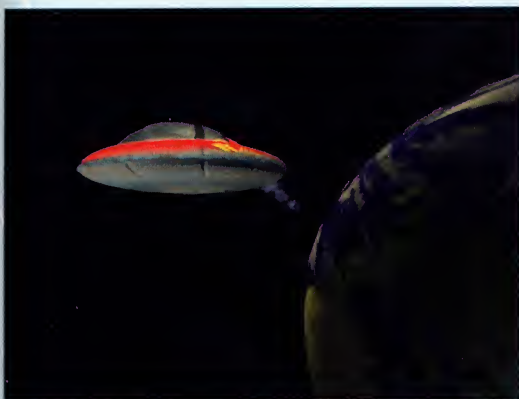
(Above left) Robert Llewellyn, *Red Dwarf*'s Kryton, is a funny bloke with an amazing vocal talent. I wonder what he makes of his starring role? *PC Zone* will be talking to him next issue, so we'll find out then.

## Sedating the populace

Because of the game's tremendously rich graphical style, *Feeble Files* is going to test CD-ROM drives and video cards. If you want to run the game optimally you're going to need 16Mb RAM, an eight-speed CD-ROM drive, a Pentium 120 or better and preferably a 2Mb video board. There'll also be a very complicated set of detail options to fiddle about with and a 'widescreen' version for double-speed drives. Adventuresoft are even talking about two versions of the game which will cater for both low and high-end users respectively.







If *Feeble Files* is anything to go by we can expect great things from *Simon The Sorcerer 3*.

## Consume

The highly-polished presentation echoes this marriage of self-deprecating fun and doom-laden mystery, combining scrolling screens, pre-rendered animated movies and conventional point-and-click adventuring to good effect. Most of the art has been generated by Adventuresoft's north-eastern branch in Newcastle, and there's a heck of a lot of it. The game promises to be absolutely massive.

"There are about 70 or 80 locations," Simon told me, "but many change as you progress through the game. There's one section where, after spending three weeks in a prison cell, you're released into the same locations that you've previously played through, but this time round you'll find a whole load of new characters and puzzles waiting to trap you all over again."

Which was something else I wanted to ask: I'll admit that I found the *Simon The Sorcerer* games extremely hard in places, so naturally I was curious to know if the puzzles in *Feeble Files* were going to be as difficult.

"Yeah, it will be a challenge. We've made the first section quite easy to get into, so that at least everyone gets a chance to learn about their environment and have some fun with some of the stuff found lying around. But it does become more difficult in the second section, and the third section is a real bugger! We've



tried to remain 'fair' throughout. We don't go in for all that lateral thinking bollocks."

So give us an example of something which is 'hard but fair' in the game.

"We've put quite a few logic puzzles in, which we haven't done in our games before. In one scene you're given a list of chemicals and told what they do, and you then have to mix them together to create certain effects. You're allowed to heat some of them, but not others. You know certain effects the chemicals have when combined, so you'll be required to write out what you've tried and ascertain the correct mixture you need in order to produce the desired effect to solve the puzzle. It's a case of 'I've done this, now I've got to do this, then I've got the answer'. I doubt if anyone will be able to keep all the information in their

## The entire populace is force-fed 'happy pills' to quell any subversive tendencies they may have.

head so you'll have to use a pen and paper, but we think that's reasonably fair. We just really want to give the player something to think about."

## Reproduce

As Simon navigates me through significant points in the game, pointing out how Adventuresoft's ARGOS II adventure writing system works, explaining their 5000 lines of speech and how their highly interactive conversation system really does help keep the ball rolling, I immediately become aware that *Feeble Files* is something pretty special – by virtue of the fact that the whole game is very 'British' in the way in which it's been written and performed. The graphics, plot, and especially the speech, possess qualities which will undoubtedly appeal to those who know a good adventure game when they see one.

Add to this one sense of humour (irony-enabled) and a puzzle-solving mind (complete with an adventurer's patience) and *Feeble Files* could end up being a big hit this year with a lot of PC gamers. We'll find out if this is the case in our full review next issue. 2

## Make friends and influence Feeble

All the characters in *Feeble Files* have been rendered using Alias Power Animator 7.0 on Silicon Graphics Indigo 2 Workstations, and then re-touched by hand to avoid that 'plastic-y' look that tends to plague graphics processed in this manner. I think you'll agree they're looking pretty spanky for it. Here's a selection of some of the weird and wonderful creatures you'll get to meet in the finished game.



(Top) This amazing hand-drawn screen shows the path followed by Feeble as he walks to the top of the mountain. Who knows what he'll find when he gets up there...





Artillery armour upgrade (1000)



(Top) Different terrains have different strengths and weaknesses. (Above) As is the norm, *Dark Colony* uses the gradually unfolding map technique. (Far left) The human forces pay a courtesy goodwill visit to the alien HQ. (Left) The humans' equipment mainly consists of robotic killing machines.

# DARK COLONY



Beer, pizza, kebabs, frozen yoghurt, satsumas and shrunken heads – the typical programmers' diet, in fact.

**Paul Presley was going to make a joke about colonic irrigation, but we edited it out on grounds of taste. Instead we'll just say he's taking a look at something dark from Gametek.**

**G**

'M A LITTLE CONFUSED. ON THE ONE hand I've got a press release that tells me all about interstellar exploration and trips to Alpha Centauri to further man's colonisation of the stars, and on the other

I've got a storyline document telling me that all the action in Gametek's Command & Conquer-style resource management game, *Dark Colony*, takes place on Mars. Of course, I shouldn't be surprised. One of the things I've come to learn as a computer games journalist is that marketing-produced press releases usually bear little or no congruity with the finalised game. Better, I think, to go straight to the horse's mouth, this particular filly being Gametek's own programming team.

"*Dark Colony* is a futuristic real-time strategy game based on a war between a Grey alien race and human colonists over the planet Mars," they tell me. "You must choose between the Greys' superior genetic technology or the humans' advanced robotics and cybernetics. To claim total victory you must exploit Mars' hidden resources and unlock the dark secrets of its ancient alien race."

In case you're wondering, the word Grey has a capital 'G' because it's now the 'official' name for those long-fingered, large-eyed, stretchy-faced alien beings that have started showing up in every piece of paranoid US television show. They're also the aliens that you face (or control, depending on personal preferences) in *Dark Colony*.

## Earth Attacks!

In fact, while playing the current version of the game, images of Tim Burton's insanely brilliant *Mars Attacks!* kept springing to mind. The aliens have just the right level of psychotic malevolence about them, as well as sporting a wonderful array of strange organic weaponry.

"One of the main intentions of the game was to provide a graphic punch to the battles," explain the team, "to immerse the player in a far more intense atmosphere than those of other games. We feel confident that *Dark Colony*'s look and feel currently surpasses our competition."

Of course, the competition (namely C&C) relied on more than just looking and feeling good. At the core of every strategy game of this ilk is the AI system; Gametek are confident that while their engine doesn't exactly simulate the highest levels of human brain patterns, it's more than capable of putting up a decent challenge while still offering a few nice bonuses.

"It isn't possible to cover everything using our present game mechanics. For example, if you attempted a surprise attack your units would probably be decimated as they turned back to retreat – but it is good enough to mount effective attacks, know when to fight or retreat and do its best to circumvent your forces to obtain its objectives though. Objectives are constantly updated through continual scouting of your troops' positions and so on.

"As well as that, the game features several innovations, including line of sight firing, terrain types in which you can hide units, commanders that affect how well your troops fight and who gain ability and experience from mission to mission. Dynamic resource allocation provide a non-static battlefield, and day and night effects which change each side's abilities on the fly."

In some respects, *Dark Colony* is similar to EIDOS' forthcoming *Conquest Earth*, although it's fair to say that Gametek's effort has a lighter, more humorous feel to it, in the same way that *Mars Attacks!* is a lighter version of *Independence Day*. And we all know which of those two films is better, don't we? **Z**

## Product details

Developer: Gametek

Publisher: Gametek

Website: [www.gametek.com](http://www.gametek.com)

Release Date: June



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# INDEPENDENCE

A movie poster for the film 'Independence Day'. The top half of the image shows a dark, starry space with a large, dark, textured object (the alien ship) flying towards the viewer. The bottom half shows a city skyline at night, with a bright orange and red sky. A large, detailed alien ship is shown in the foreground, flying over the city. The ship has a complex, metallic structure with various panels and lights. The overall tone is dramatic and action-oriented.

**Also Look For Independence Day  
On Video Before It's Gone!**



# INDEPENDENCE DAY<sup>TM</sup>

## THE GAME

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CENTROPOLIS  
ENTERTAINMENT

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# Review ZONE



We have to admit that we weren't holding out massive hopes for LucasArts' latest 3D shooter *Outlaws*, but were pleasantly surprised when it finally came in for review. It may look dated, but it's got heaps of atmosphere and is actually pretty playable, especially when played over a network. Try it, we loved it.

## In Perspective

This is designed to be a purely visual guide as to how games of a similar style compare to one another. The bars do not relate to previous review scores... they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.

Game 1

Game 2

## Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunch-time/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Theme Hospital  
Carnageddon  
Darklight Conflict  
Puzzle Bobble  
Quake: Scourge Of Armagon

## Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

The Need For Speed 2  
The Dark Hour (Quake add-on disk)  
Banzai Bugs  
Sega Rally  
Daytona USA

## Scoring system

90+	CLASSIC
80-89	RECOMMENDED
70-79	GOOD
50-69	AVERAGE
40-49	BELOW AVERAGE
21-39	POOR
20 and below	PANTS

## Reviews index

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<b>Sandwarriors</b>	88
<b>Terracide</b>	98



The advent of 3D accelerators has meant that we're now seeing some very tasty in-game graphics. Check out *Terracide* if you need convincing.



## Thanks this issue to

- Heather Twist @ LucasArts
- Doug Et Woody @ VIE
- Rebecca Et Bröderbund
- Petoir @ GT Interactive
- Lidia @ EIDOS
- John Romero
- Special thanks to Spike, Sam Et Tuft

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## Awards



### 90+ CLASSIC

The highest accolade a game can attain. It's innovative, extremely playable and has masses of long-term appeal. If you're going to buy a game this month, it should be this.



### 80-89 RECOMMENDED

An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something to make it a gaming classic. Well worth checking out, especially if you're a big fan of the genre.



### 20 and below PANTS

Absolutely bloody awful. Crap with a capital C. Naff with a capital N. Do not buy this game, it will ruin your life and all those who come into contact with you. Got it? Have we made ourselves clear?

## Looking back

# Carmageddon overload!

**W**HILE SOME OF us have been catching up with all the games released recently we haven't had time to play, others have been delving into the ancient archives of PC gaming history in search of the best in gameplay. Our distinguished editor Jeremy, for example, has been rediscovering the considerable delights of *Monkey Island 1* and *2*, mainly as a result of having to write the cover feature. And not by any means did he find the somewhat dated graphics in the slightest bit off-putting – although this won't surprise anyone 'in the know' *Monkey*-wise who will testify that the *Monkey* games are the funniest and most entertaining adventures ever written. Even less surprising is the news that Jeremy is still playing *CM2* to death and shows no signs of stopping, ever.

Paul Mallinson, for his part, has gone back to *Realms Of The Haunting*, completed it, and enjoyed it so much he started it all over again. He also admits to frequently loading up *Puzzle Bobble* with the intention of whiling away a few minutes, only to find himself totally immersed in it for hours.

These two fine examples of their respective gaming genres will hopefully serve as some consolation for Paul, who claims to be miffed that his speedy P166 runs *Ultima Underworld* at a rate that's slightly too fast for the game to be enjoyable.

And Paul Presley has had 'speedy PC' traumas this month too, mainly as a result of installing *Midwinter* onto the hard drive of his Pentium (on my recommendation, admittedly), only to discover that it runs so fast it's completely unplayable. Paul has had to resort to partaking in lengthy *Carmageddon* sessions to release his pent-up aggression.

Macca's still playing *Quake* (quelle surprise), conceding that, for him personally, the official *Quake* add-ons have somewhat resurrected the single-player game, though curiously he admits to also having fallen for the incredibly addictive qualities of *Puzzle Bobble*. Duncan MacDonald's been playing *Carmageddon*, *Carmageddon* and yet more *Carmageddon*, as has Charlie Brooker, who also fell foul of speedy PC syndrome when he

downloaded a *Space Invaders* clone from the Net which he claims runs at 'a zillion billion squillion miles an hour' on his PC. John Davison has finally caught up with *MDK*, which initially had him hooked, but proved a tad boring after repeated play. Unlike *Theme Hospital*, which he says gets better the more you play it. John's also



with Chris Anderson

is Wag our art editor, who's been playing *Carmageddon* in spite of the fact he hardly ever plays PC games of any description. He says he loves it because it's horrible and



been playing – wait for it – *Carmageddon* (I can see a pattern developing here – spook), while Patrick McCarthy's still shunning the outside world in favour of 24-hour sessions of *CM2*, his excuse being that he's just won the European Cup for the fourth season running with Spurs (it's not real Patrick, it's not *real*). Making his first (and very welcome) appearance in Looking Back

nasty and reckons he's exactly the sort of person who *should* be banned from playing it. Me? Rather than Looking Back, I've been Looking Forward actually, to *X-COM 3*, a beta copy of which just arrived at the office as we closed this issue. What's it like? You'll just have to wait till next month when I review it to find out, won't you? (*Git – A Reader*) See you then. **Z**



**ATI 3D**  
Native Version  
Available



**3DBLASTER**  
Native Version  
Available



**3DFX**  
Native Version  
Available



**DIAMOND Stealth**  
Native Version  
Available



**MATROX MYSTIQUE**  
Native Version  
Available



**POWERVR**  
Native Version  
Available



The software is designed to take advantage of **D3D**



The software is designed to take advantage of **MMX**



This software will only run under **WINDOWS 95**



The software may run slowly, especially in hi-res mode



The software supports **MICROSOFT DIRECTINPUT**



The software supports **MICROSOFT DIRECTPLAY**



The software supports **INTERNET PLAY**



The software will run acceptably on a **486DX2/66**

### THE BENCHMARK PC

At PC Zone all games are played and tested on a DAN Technology Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM, a 2Mb graphics card and a quad-speed CD-ROM drive.





# Outlaws



Use the sneaky sniper mode to take out those bastard hoodlums from long range. Give 'em half a chance and they'll do it to you first.

**Charlie Brooker's a cowboy.**  
**On the steel horse he rides.**  
**And he's wanted (wahhhn-the-hehed). Dead or alive...**

**R**

REMEMBER THOSE TELLY ADS FOR LYNX aftershave? The one that sticks in my mind was set on a bus, in the glaring heat of a foreign country which seemed to be in the middle of an armed insurrection. Onboard are loads of ugly civilians (most of them wrinkly old ladies), and a Sultry Latin-American Chick (who looks like she'd be – you know – a bit mucky given half a chance).

But of course the ad wouldn't be complete without one particular passenger – Lynx Bloke. The atmosphere is hot, stuffy and cramped – all blistered breath and body odour – not to mention unbearably tense. Suddenly, the bus jolts. Everybody looks uncomfortable. Then, rolling down the centre aisle, we see what appears to be a *grenade*. Gasps of horror. All the passengers paint their pants brown. Except, of course, for Lynx Bloke, who strolls over, picks it up, smiles smugly and pops it back in his pocket. Because it wasn't a grenade after all, *silly* – it was a can of Lynx. Sultry Latin-American Chick pouts admiringly at Lynx Bloke, and up comes the slogan: "Lynx – because first impressions *last*."

Fine – except, of course, it's total bollocks. For starters, only a complete geek would drop his toiletries on a crowded bus and then fail to apologise after inadvertently scaring the



(Above) A true bounty hunter shows no mercy. Here I am blasting somebody's buttocks into paté. (Bottom right) All your favourite western clichés are present and correct in *Outlaws*. Here's the obligatory 'fight-on-a-moving-train' scene. (Top right) The best levels are the ones in which you attack heavily-armed forts such as this...





The jail's empty. And like a fishmonger, it's your job to fillet.

shit out of everybody. And anyway – first impressions *don't* always last. You want proof? Just ask any married couple. Or play *Outlaws*. Because when you start playing *Outlaws*, it feels downright cruddy.

### How the West won me over

*Outlaws* is a *Doom*-style 3D shoot 'em up... as opposed to a *Quake*-style shoot 'em up. The engine, it has to be said, is a bit too 1995 (and two years is a long time in videogame technology). Okay, it can run at an 800x600 resolution – but fundamentally it's just an enhanced version of the *Dark Forces* engine (which wasn't all that amazing when it first appeared). Furthermore, the frame rate is a touch slow (it chugs on a P90), and while the cut-scenes are superb, the in-game cartoon graphics look clumsy (with some unforgivably rough-looking barnyard animals marring the first level completely).

In fact, my first impression of *Outlaws* was so negative

### "Don't be a fool, Marshall!"

There's no denying that *Outlaws* employs the talents of LucasArts' sound engineers to great effect. Aside from the rousing Spaghetti Western soundtrack (complete with whipcrack and harmonica workouts) there's the childish taunts of the enemy to spur you on. Y'see, this is one game in which you end up *really hating* the bad guys. They're snide little bastards who like nothing better than ducking down behind barrels, yelling "Hey! Mister Lawman!" in a mocking tone, and then popping up unexpectedly to shoot you in the back of the head.

Their incessant name-calling is genuinely amusing – albeit a little repetitive – and it's all delivered with a delicious slack-jawed southern drawl (the kind of accent in which the word 'genuine' is pronounced 'gen-u-wine'). Play it for a while and you'll soon be annoying your friends by using them as drop-of-a-hat catchphrases. My only criticism is that some of the taunts aren't stinging enough: the strongest is probably "It's too bad you've got manure for brains". I'd have preferred sarcastic sexual advances. You know the sort of thing: "You shure are *purdy*, mistah lawman!", or "Hey – come heah and kiss me, you big burly man, yew!", or perhaps "Squeal, piggy! Squeeeaa!" Here's hoping LucasArts address this important issue in any future sequel.

## The right to bear arms

Since *Outlaws* is set in the thrilling days of yesteryear, you can forget all about laser cannons and electronic proximity mines (although, bizarrely, not about suspiciously hi-tech HUD maps, but we'll ignore that). The weapons you'll be a-huntin' with would be described as 'quaint' by the experts on *Antiques Roadshow* – and it's hard to imagine them saying *that* about a plasma grenade. Each weapon has to be manually reloaded, and has two methods of use...

### .45 PISTOL

The original, classic six-shooter. Despite its apparent weediness, a headshot from this little critter is enough to give all but the burliest of villains a 'bad skull day'. Press the 'alternative fire' button and you can loose off all six shots in that really cool way that involves repeatedly slapping the hammer with the palm of your hand. There's probably a proper word for but that I don't know what it is. Cough. (*It's called 'fanning' – Ed*)

### .44 RIFLE

My favourite weapon. It may look a bit puny, but it's quick, efficient, and carries more bullets than anything else (save the Gatling gun). Best of all, if you find a rifle scope, you can carry out some très cool long-range sniping.

### SHOTGUNS

Shotguns come in three distinct flavours: single-barrel (pretty poo), double-barrel (pretty deadly), and sawn-off (limited range, but *very* effective). They all have one main disadvantage: reloading is a constant, time-consuming chore. But then there's the main advantage to consider, too: they make you feel like a real hardnose.

### BOWIE KNIFE

Surprisingly effective, the humble Bowie knife is the weapon of choice for those aiming for a 'silent but violent' approach. It can be thrown or thrust into the face (which, assuming you're as sick as me, is hilarious).

### DYNAMITE

Light it with your cigar, Clint-style. Toss it to a friend. See their face light up – before it slaps against the wall on the other side of the room. Aside from its obvious mass-murdering potential, dynamite can be gainfully employed for blowing holes through walls (where many a secret area can be found).

### GATLING GUN

The weapon that demands respect. You can't run with a Gatling gun – it sits on a kind of tripod after all – but you *can* silence an entire town with one. Watch the bad guys come over all Tetley: ten thousand perforations to let the innards flood out.

I was all set to write a piece of venomous, scowling sarcasm, during which I'd chastise LucasArts for blotting their relatively unblemished copybook. But now, having spent a downright embarrassing amount of time playing the damn thing, I've been forced to re-evaluate my position. Which, currently, is this: despite the off-putting engine, *Outlaws* rocks.

Yeah, it's unusual to find an unfolding storyline behind games of this type (especially one with *entertaining* cut-scenes), but I won't harp on because it's perfunctory stuff, really ('ex-bounty hunter returns to avenge his wife's murder blah blah blah'), and besides, I found the 'secondary' mode of play – which has no storyline – more absorbing.



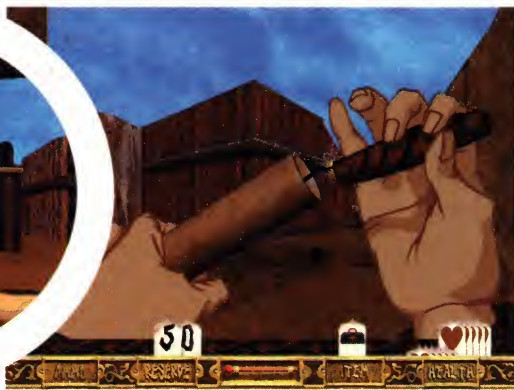




(Above) The levels in *Outlaws* are a pleasant mixture of indoor claustrophobia and outdoor splendour. (Bottom right) Light blue touch paper, then throw it in his face!



Here's the shootin' – now where's the rootin' an' tootin'?



## Gizza sequel!

Attention LucasArts: please, please *please* can we have a spangly new sequel to *Outlaws*, like, really quickly? With a greatly improved engine? Pretty please? We *love* the game, but the engine... well, you know. It's a bit on the 'quaint' side. So how's about it, eh? Oh, *go on...*

## There's no justice – just us

It's only when you're suitably addicted to the gameplay that you start to notice all the other good points about the package as a whole. The authentic Spaghetti Western ambience (the Morricone-inspired accompanying score is terrific), the faultless presentation, the entertaining level design (generally a little 'boxy', but darned fine nonetheless), the weird 'undocumented features' (if anyone at LucasArts can explain the poodle sporting sunglasses that showed up unexpectedly on one of the levels, I'd be most grateful), and the fact that it represents good value for money (big levels, and loads of 'em).

If you were to cast a cursory glance at *Outlaws* it would be all too easy to snort with derision. Believe me – all you have to do is play it for a while and you'll find it hard to tear yourself away. Check it out. **Z**

## How to further your enjoyment of Outlaws

- Use a combination of mouse and keyboard, *Quake*-style. Look around with the mouse, move your feet with the keys.
- Learn to duck and strafe very, very quickly indeed.
- Turn on the crosshairs (from the options menu).
- Ride slowly towards your computer on a horse before you start to play.
- When you die, shout "Awwk! Ya got me!"
- Each time you complete a stage don't forget to celebrate in the traditional manner. Visit your local pub, become embroiled in a game of poker, start a violent brawl, shoot some bottles, hurl somebody into the mirror behind the bar, then go upstairs and unwind in a foaming tin bath with a gorgeous buxom prostitute.

## In Perspective

It's not really fair to compare *Outlaws* against *Quake*, because... well, it's not really fair to compare *anything* to *Quake* (except more *Quake*). But here's how *Outlaws* measures up against a posse of similar games...

*Outlaws*

*Quake*

*Duke Nukem 3D*

*Virtua Cop*

*Dark Forces*

*Hexen*

*Doom 2*

*Terminator: Future Shock*

## Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: Windows 95 compatible

Controls: Mouse, joystick, keyboard



## Score

Clunky engine, funky game.

83

Price: £34.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: LucasArts/Virgin Interactive Entertainment

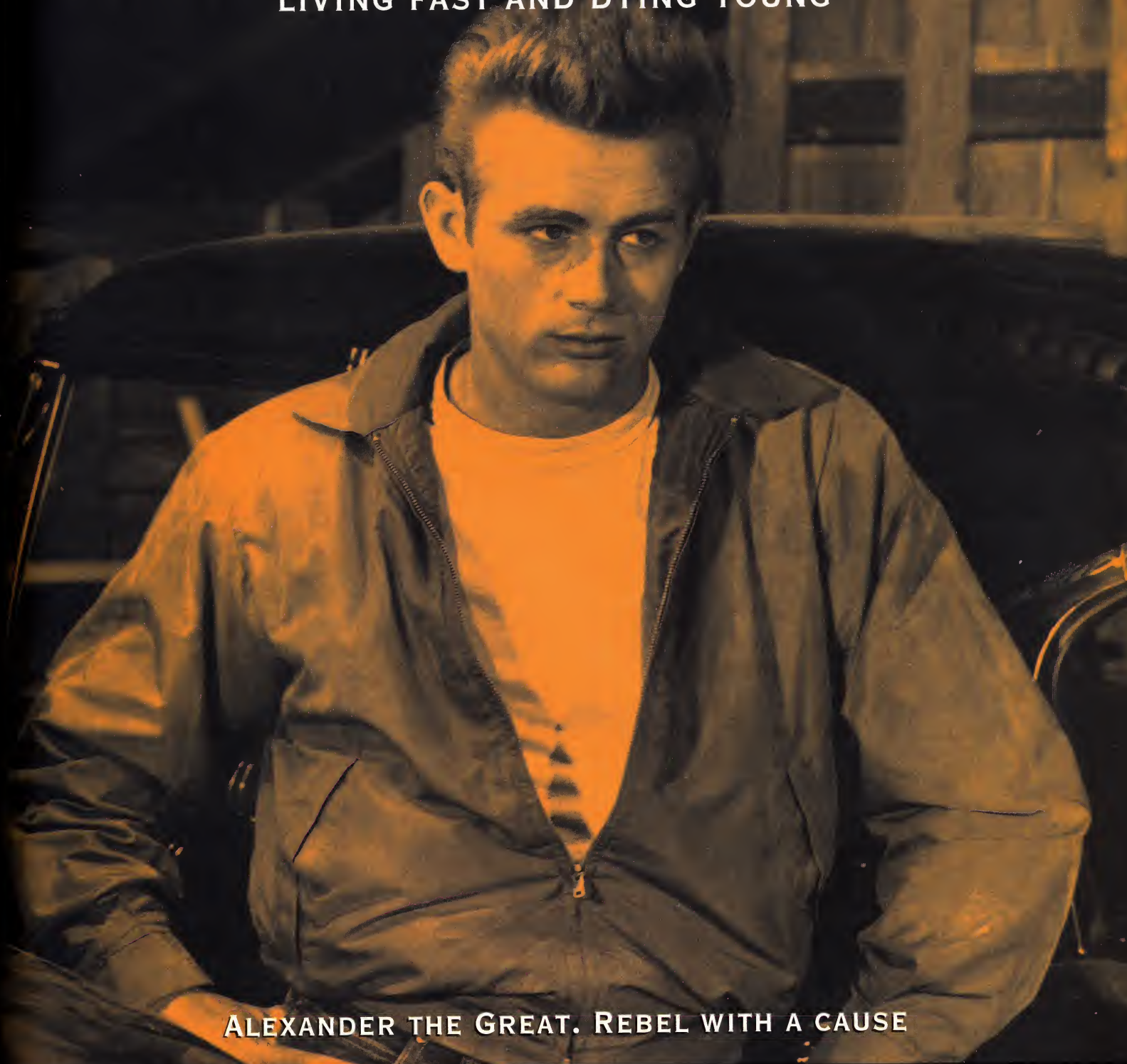
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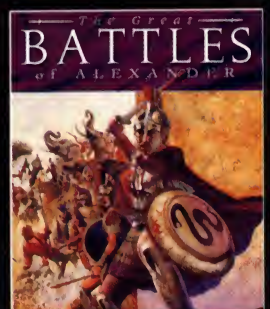
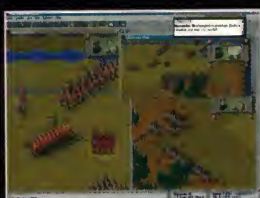
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# Comanche 3



Fancy an 'epic' review? Then look no further: the following three pages took five days out of **Duncan MacDonald's** life and necessitated him travelling 10,000 miles.

Read on...



EATHROW AIRPORT, SUNDAY MORNING, and I'm approaching the BA pre-paid ticket desk... I'm off to Florida. It was all a very last minute thing: I'd received the phone call from PC Zone only the day before, and all I knew at this moment was that I was going to be reviewing Comanche 3. (Er, but in America, rather than from within my smelly flat or at the office, so I certainly wasn't pissed off or anything.) Then a 'surprise'.

"Duncan!" said the voice.

Blimey, it was none other than Simon Bradley, PC Zone contributor (and real-life chopper pilot).

"Blimey," I replied. Simon told me that he, too, was off to the Comanche 3 launch; indeed we were on the same plane.

What? Had we been double-booked? What was going on?

"I've been working with NovaLogic in a freelance consultancy capacity,"

explained Simon as we headed toward the departure lounge.

"I've been working with the programmers, on the helicopter flight model."

Aha! So, cue horrible BA flight, sitting next to a fat Italian bastard who first spills tomato juice on my leg and then snores in my left ear for nine hours.

## The itinerary

It's a rather posh hotel in Palm Beach (it's got its own golf course for gawd's sake), and Simon and I have joined the American computer press and NovaLogic throng in the Seafood Bar. Hating seafood, I concentrate instead on the

neverending supply of chilled Guinness, thanking my lucky stars that most white Americans pretend to be of Irish lineage and therefore celebrate St Patrick's day. Five cans later and I'm forced to light a cigarette, which is virtually a crime in these parts... so I'm greatly relieved when Jackie – a NovaLogic PR girl who looks like Naomi Campbell's much, much prettier sister (swoon) – sparks up as well.

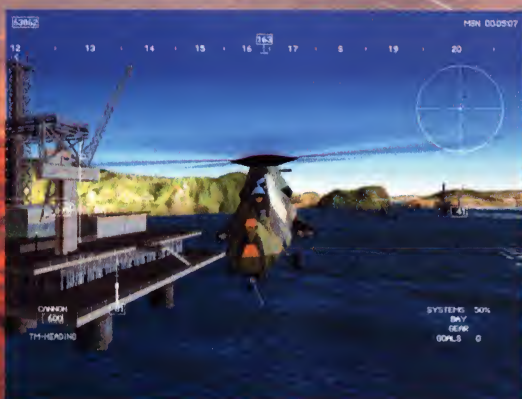
God bless her! And God bless America too, especially when the activities for the next couple of days are announced:

1. Hands-on experience on Comanche 3, which includes flight instruction, a chance for some head-to-head network action (over four machines), and then a competition: the journalist who racks up the most points on a selected range of missions wins a 'superb prize'. (Duncan came last – Ed)  
2. Yippee! Get this: a helicopter lesson. A real helicopter lesson, for everyone present, in a Jetranger. Why are NovaLogic forking out all this dosh? I'll get to that, but don't forget it's all tax deductible anyway.

3. The genuine article: in other words we're going to the Sikorsky Development Flight Centre where we'll be treated to a Comanche air display, and then get to talk to the test pilot.



I'm not saying this screenshot is worthy of inclusion in an art gallery, but if it was it'd have to be called 'Collision in Green'. (Or, failing that, 'Night view through Image Intensifier'.)



According to the NovaLogic chaps you can make the bloke in the front of the Comanche puke up if you do enough stomach churning aerobatics.





The newspaper headline read: 'Helicopter pilot killed while trying to get good close-up view of enemy warship'.

Cool. The drink continues to flow, and Simon launches into his personal-experience helicopter pilot anecdote library, much to the joy of a receptive American audience. And me? Er, I've known him for ages, and so suspend belief for 90 per cent of the routine. Still, who can compete with his tale, whether true or not, of almost being hit by an exocet missile during the Falklands War? You know? My most interesting counter could only be something like "Hey, what do you guys think of my trousers? I bought them in Croydon." (And then I'd have to explain where Croydon was.) I decide to keep my mouth shut. Simon's Boy's Own Adventure tirade continues, meanwhile, until three in the morning.

## Wakey wakey

Eight o'clock alarm call. Groan. Off to the conference room, where I've just missed breakfast. John Garcia, NovaLogic's MD, is 'coming clean' as I lean slobbishly against a wall, a cup of rosie-lea in hand. What he's saying, to put things in a nutshell, is that NovaLogic are a tad pissed off. They've had top-selling aircraft games with the *Comanche* brand, and, more recently, with *F-22 Lightning*, yet the press refuse to take the company seriously, sticking their efforts firmly into the 'arcade game' rather than the 'flight sim' bucket. He then defends arcade-style games, admitting along the way that the original *Comanche* was pretty arcadey, but adding that *F-22* was far more realistic than the press gave it credit for. At the end of the day he's more than happy with the company's sales figures but wants critical acclaim as well – if not for the earlier games, then at least for this one...

"The realistic flight mode in *Comanche 3*

is authentic." He winks at Simon, then fixes his gaze back on us press boys. "Um, how many of you have actually flown a real helicopter, by the way?" No hands are raised, and the point has been made.

Thus the forthcoming helicopter lesson. But first off we go to the gaming room.

(Top left) A cottage with smoke coming out of its chimney. Talk about picturesque! (But, er, let's pretend it had nothing to do with my Hellfire missile.)

## Nice graphics, er, arcade game?

Like *Longbow*, *Comanche 3* has a tutorial mode, with a voice-over from an 'instructor'. Everything is covered over five lessons, from basic hassle-free flight through to shit-hits-fan intensity. It all seems a lot more 'free' than the *Longbow* tutorial mode, too, and as a result you don't tend to get ahead of (or lag behind) the sampled instructions. You can choose your pace, essentially, and can even go sightseeing. (Or sound-listening: birds in the trees, the gentle clank-clank-clank of nodding oil-pumps, and so on – the sonics are as good as the graphics.)

But the tutorial experience eventually has to end, and, after the obligatory in-game 'Well done – here's your first

## It's like chess, this helicopter warfare lark. In fact it's also very much like a tank game. Armored Fist, anyone?

medal' ceremony, the thicker end of the *Comanche 3* wedge beckons. And now things start to get hard.

There are four scenarios, each of which is split into eight missions – and the eighth mission in each scenario isn't available until the previous seven have been completed... yes, a bit like an arcade game: four scenarios, four bosses, take the other missions in any order you like.

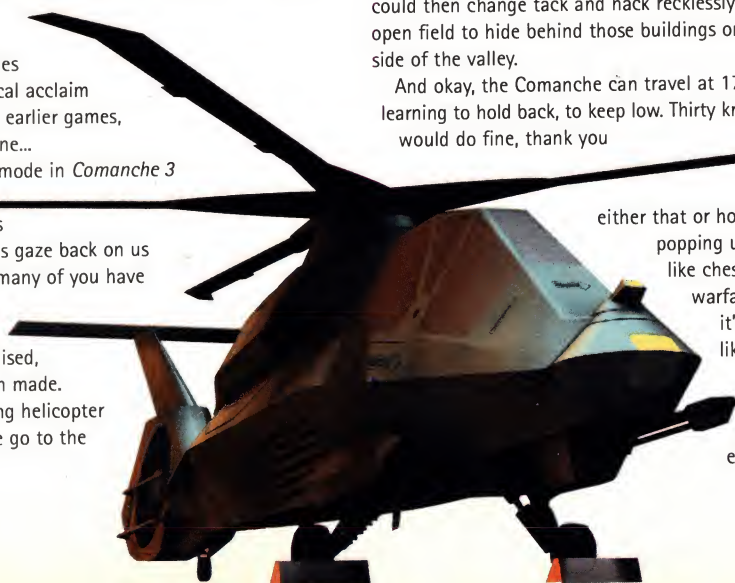
And as I've just said, things were now very tricky indeed. Yup, with the tutorial over I was being shot down with alarming regularity. Restart. Die. Restart. Die. Restart. Die. NovaLogic people were watching over my shoulder. I made excuse noises to the tune that I was using the 'realistic' flight model. And I was – but time for a rethink. Time to adhere less strictly to the direct waypoint routes, I felt, and time to use the superbly realised terrain to my advantage, rather than just enjoying it as eye candy. Yes, I could hug that treeline. Yes, I could drop into that hollow and then sideslip across the road to my right and let off a quick Hellfire before sideslipping back into cover again. Yes, I could then change tack and hack recklessly across an open field to hide behind those buildings on the northern side of the valley.

And okay, the *Comanche* can travel at 170 knots, but I was learning to hold back, to keep low. Thirty knots at 25 feet would do fine, thank you

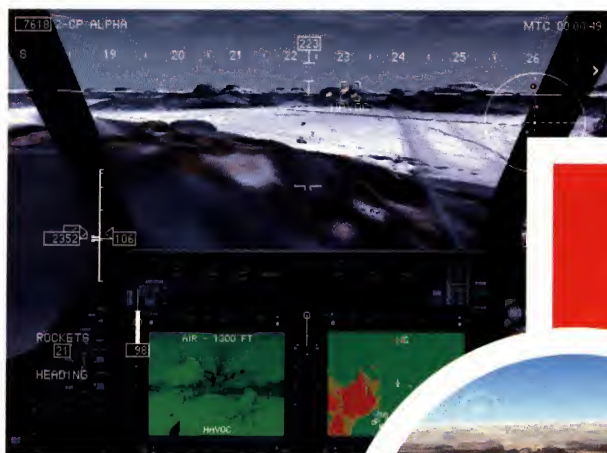
very much – either that or hovering (and popping up and down). It's like chess, this helicopter warfare lark. In fact it's also very much like a tank game, a genre which NovaLogic are no strangers to either. Armored



A real *Comanche*! And the guy next to the bloke doing an orange Tango impression is John Garcia, head honcho at NovaLogic.







The graphics in *Comanche 3* are absolutely superb – and it's all thanks to the wonders of VoxelSpace technology...



Fist, anyone? And, coincidentally, *Armored Fist 2* is just around the corner, as, unfortunately for me in my *Comanche*, was a mobile SAM launcher. It locked me up and blew me out of the sky.

"Bad luck Duncan," said Simon gleefully. "You weren't doing particularly badly until then."

Bastard.

### The real chopper lesson

I won't harp on about this because I didn't do too well. I've flown a Cessna before and it was a piece of piss: no more difficult, really, than driving a car. I assumed a helicopter would be – to tag on a simple multiplication factor – about three times harder. Wrong. Try 100 times harder. 200 even. And having cocky Simon sitting in the back seat made it even worse. It's not the multiple limb co-ordination that's the problem, it's the sensitivity of the instruments – or at least it is in a *Jetranger*: a 5mm movement on either of the control devices can magnify itself within moments, if you don't know what you're doing, into an out-of-shape death plunge. I hovered magnificently for 1.39 seconds, for example. Then Randy (the patronising and porky Tom Cruise lookalike tutor) had to urgently resume control. Doh! Still, I took from the experience the knowledge that the basic *Comanche 3* helicopter flight model, in realism mode, as John Garcia had said, is pretty top.

### Voxels: you decide

To this day I still don't know exactly what Voxel graphics are, but I can tell you one thing: in *Comanche 3* they work a treat. Just look at the screenshots. However, there are, it seems, some limitations. The real *Comanche* can loop the loop, for instance. The game won't let you, though, because VoxelSpace isn't particularly keen on being turned upside-down. Another problem is that VoxelSpace goes all crap at altitude: which is why the *Comanche* in *Comanche 3* has a service ceiling of just 2000 feet (as opposed to the real *Comanche*'s 15,000 feet). These are moot points if you're intending to play the game as it expects to be played (ie at low level with no stunt attempts), but if you're a 'complete freedom' junkie you may be a tad miffed. Mind you, having said that, I'm a complete freedom junkie myself... and the above restrictions didn't piss me off at all, so maybe this entire panel is redundant. Still, alter my score as you see fit (and take another two points off if you hate not having a shadow).

### And now for the denouement

As I said at the beginning of this review, the final item on the agenda was the visit to the Sikorsky Development Centre.

After a briefing from the Boeing/Sikorsky PR geezer, we were marched outside, where we saw the first vaguely operational *Comanche* fly past. My hopes of seeing some top aerobatics were quickly quashed as we stood there and watched it fly first one way, then back, and then the first way again. Yawn. Then it landed. Time to talk to the pilot.

I'd just asked him whether the MicroProse joystick twist-grip style tail rotor control mechanism was easier to use than foot pedals – and whether the fact that his feet were now freed up meant that they could be put to use in other ways – when, for what seemed the umpteenth time that day, Simon leapt into the picture.

"Hi, I'm not a journalist, I'm a helicopter pilot," he chirped.

The *Comanche* jock wasn't impressed.

"...Er, what's she like to fly?" added Simon, sheepishly.

"Buddy, this here's fly-by-wire technology. There's a computer-style joystick in there. It's as easy as playin' a freakin' arcade game, godammit!"

Spook! It's a pretty bizarre turn of events, for sure, but what that means is that if you want complete realism in *Comanche 3*, you're probably best off selecting the 'arcade' mode. If you opt for 'realism' mode you'll be getting a flight model along the lines of an *Apache* or something. What a strange old world it is. And what an absolute corker of a game *Comanche 3* is, too. **Z**



Have you ever been to Port Talbot in Wales? No? Well, you have now.

### In Perspective

*Comanche 1* was cool in its day, but is dead arcade and suffers from a tiny playing area. *Apache Longbow* looks nice, plays well, but I now know the flight model to be crap. *Comanche 3* is, well, read the review: it's the dog's bollocks, basically.

*Comanche 1*

*Apache Longbow*

*Comanche 3*

### Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P100 and above

Graphics: VGA/SVGA (VESA required for hi-res)

Sound: SoundBlaster and 100% compatibles

Controls: Joystick and/or keyboard

Note: Decoding hardware required for Dolby Surround



### Score

An intense helicopter gaming experience with bucketloads of atmosphere and an 'arcade' flight model which is, ironically, hyper realistic. Spook!

92

Price: £39.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: NovaLogic

Telephone: 0171 405 1777

Website: <http://www.novalogic.com>

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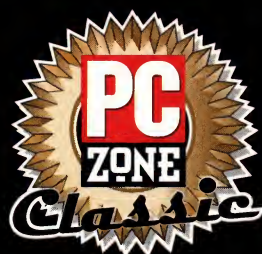
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"A classic game . . . I would snap it up quickly when it's released in May." **Games Domain (Internet)**

"The physics are quite simply superb." **PC Home**

"Ban death game call by Pope." **Lancashire Evening Telegraph**





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# Sandwarriors



**Ancient Egyptians, cats, two races battling for control of a timegate? Charlie Brooker wondered when Kurt Russell was going to appear, until he realised that he was confusing *Sandwarriors* with *Stargate*...**

themselves were quite literally 'off the planet' – and either were, or merely *best mates with*, extra-terrestrials from another world. It's an idea that has provided the springboard to many a sci-fi extravaganza (*Battlestar Galactica*, *Stargate*), and doubtless an old episode of *The Goodies*, too. Now its

***Your task? To ensure that when the two tribes go to war, the solitary point scored belongs to your side.***

T

HERE ARE COUNTLESS MYSTERIES associated with the ancient Egyptians. How did they manage to build the pyramids – a series of structures we'd be hard-pressed to make today, even with our high-falutin' modern construction techniques? How come they appear to have known so much about the solar

system, the positioning and motion of the stars? Why worship cats? Why so much eyeliner? Why? How? When?

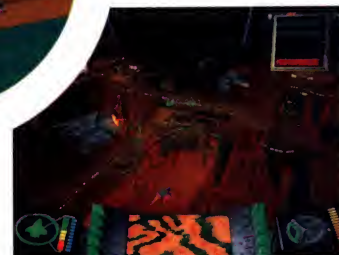
Few bygone civilisations pose so many unanswerable questions, so perhaps it's not surprising that an increasing number of people actually believe that the ancient Egyptians

influence has spread to the world of PC gaming. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the olde-worlde hi-tech blastfest that is *Sandwarriors*.

Yes, *Sandwarriors*. And no, it isn't a beat 'em up where you get to toss sand in each other's eyes. More's the pity.

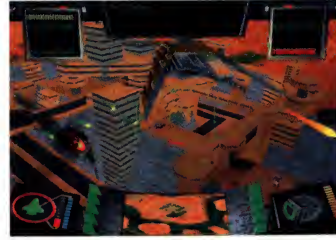
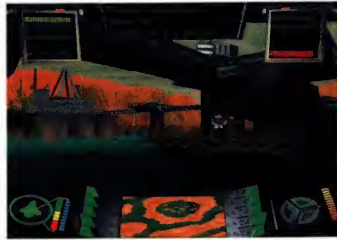
## Pharaoh nuff

*Sandwarriors* is set in the year 6225 BC (a long time ago by anyone's standards), on a distant 'desert planet', populated by two



(Above) Dakdakedakdak! Puchewpuchewpuchew! Etc! Etc! (Top right) Looking over your left shoulder – note the funky Egyptian graffiti etched onto the frame of your ship: it translates as 'Up the Spurs', apparently. (Bottom right) A pre-nosejob Sphinx. I think I prefer it without the hooter, don't you? (*Who cares? – Weary reader*)





(Left) Have some of that, you ground-based, anti-aircraft tank-type thing, you!  
(Bottom left) Night falls, and *Sandwarriors* looks slightly prettier than before.



warring factions who are having one heck of a barney. Forget 'The Jocks and the Geordies' – we're talking genocide here. Oddly enough, they're fighting each other for control of a mysterious, hidden 'timegate': a space/time vortex thing that leads to Earth (it's a bit like a gigantic Windows 95 shortcut, really, except faintly more esoteric and other-worldly).

Naturally, this is where you come in. As the game begins, you're a soldier for the House of Osiris. You've got a nifty little spaceship thing (which can swoop around like a bird) and a smattering of weapons. Your task? To ensure that when the two tribes go to war, the solitary point that shall be scored belongs to your side.

Unless you've recently had your eyes torn out by wolves, and someone's reading this text aloud at your hospital bedside in an attempt to keep your spirits up (in which case I recommend Puffin Books' *1001 Riddles For Kids* instead), you'll have already looked at the screenshots and deduced that *Sandwarriors* is a 3D cockpit-based blast 'em up. And you've probably also noted that 1) it's quite pretty, 2) it's

also rather detailed, and 3) it has nice lighting and transparency effects in it. You'd be utterly correct in your assumptions; I've repeated them here simply to confirm your towering genius.

Sadly, *Sandwarriors* is more impressive in static screenshots than it is in the 'virtual flesh'. Perhaps I've been spoiled by *Privateer 2: The Darkening* and *Darklight Conflict*, but I think a healthy frame rate wins over visual detail any day of the week. Obviously, you can reduce the on-screen detail, but the frame rate isn't wonderful. At a low resolution, it's a bit ugly as well. Please don't get me wrong: it's playable and far from unimpressive – but I tend to use LucasArt's *TIE Fighter* as a yardstick by which to judge these things (it may look sparse by today's standards, but by God it flows), and if *Sandwarriors* impresses me less than *that*, something's awry.

Given time, the gameplay itself is quite involving, albeit fairly uninspiring. Arcade-style simplicity is the order of the day (praise the Lord), with mission objectives clearly spoken aloud over your comms system at the start of each stage. Even if you haven't played a cockpit combateer since the old *Elite* days, you could dive in here and pick up the thread within a few minutes. For this, Gremlin should be heartily applauded. Furthermore, there are several very neat touches, such as the ultra-handly preset flight manoeuvres (you can fly in circles around your selected target at the touch of a button) – yet overall there's a pervasive sense of little on offer here which hasn't been done before: an unusual premise can't disguise the fact.

### Tut tut tut

Sorry Gremlin, but with the jaw-dropping majesty of *Darklight Conflict* already in direct competition, and the essential-purchase multi-player sexfest of *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* drawing ever closer, *Sandwarriors* needs something very special indeed to make any impact. It doesn't. It won't.

It's not a *bad* game by any means; it simply just doesn't distinguish itself from the pack. As Ron Pickering used to say to the losing team on the programme *We Are The Champions*, that's just "hard lines".

## Stargate? Arsegate, more like

You don't have to be the world's most astute trash-culture junkie to notice a startling 'similarity' between *Sandwarriors* (the computer game) and *Stargate* (the movie): both make heavy use of Egyptian imagery, feature mucho spaceship-related hi-jinks, and have plots which revolve around intergalactic slippages to Earth. It's fairly obvious that someone at Gremlin has been heavily 'influenced' by the film.

This is where I start scratching my head, because I thought the movie *sucked*. We're not talking about a light bit of sucking, either – it sucked so hard I thought I was going to be pulled out of my seat and right through the screen. You see, I was unfortunate

enough to see it in the cinema; I fell asleep *three times*. One of my companions kept nudging me awake – and each time I was dismayed to find that the poxy thing was *still going*, like some kind of relentless, rolling boredom ball, a 600ft-high granite sphere of tedium, intent on mercilessly crushing anything of interest with its fearsome mass. Towards the end (a great big tapered end, like a turd's end) I even tried applying my mental powers to the task of bringing about some kind of telekinetic projector-destruction – sadly to no avail.

Why rip off such a dull film? What next? A Merchant Ivory-inspired platform game? Eh? EH?

## In Perspective

*Sandwarriors* ain't bad, but it ain't original either. Despite all the 'Chariots of the Gods' storyline, it's pretty much standard cockpit-blasting fare. Place it alongside a few of the other 3D zap 'em ups on the market, and the scores on the doors look something like this:

*Sandwarriors*

*Darklight Conflict*

*Wing Commander IV*

*Privateer 2: The Darkening*

*TIE Fighter*

## Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and 100% compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse (joystick strongly recommended)



## Score

Pyramiddle of the road.



Price: £TBC

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Gremlin

Telephone: 01142 753423

Web site: <http://www.gremlin.co.uk>

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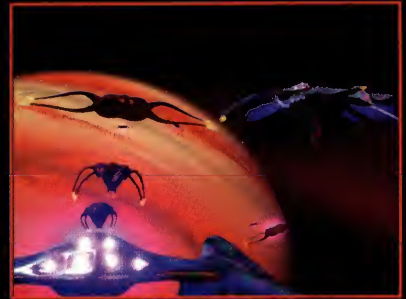




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EIDOS  
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# Moto Racer



On C4's *Countdown* recently, Carol Vorderman picked out the letters R, M, O, R, C, E, T, O and A. Duncan MacDonald got the nine letter word 'Moto Racer', but it wasn't in the dictionary. There is, however, an eight-letter word available: can you find it?



MMM, A MOTOCROSS GAME. I'LL START with a vaguely relevant (but true) anecdote. Right, when I was 13 I lived near a disused quarry, where I'd regularly meet up with chums, one of whom, Peter, would sometimes bring his older brother's Montesa 250 trial bike. What fun we had, we kids, as we slowly began to push the envelope: stunts akimbo, but quite weedy ones in retrospect. However, one ridiculously hot Summer afternoon, I dared Peter to ride off the top of the quarry – which involved a sheer drop of about 30 feet before making contact with the 45 degree sloping sand bank that led to the quarry's interior. (We did the jump regularly on foot, but on a motorbike? Forget it!) Much to everyone's surprise, Peter took the dare, kick-started the Montesa, and went for it. Uh-oh.

Looking down over the edge, we saw he was now spread-eagled at the bottom of the quarry, with the still revving bike beside him. We climbed down, and could hear his groans.

"My leg, my leg," he was yelping, and we could see what he meant: his shattered shin bone had pierced the skin in three places. Yikes. Tim's house was the nearest, so he was dispatched to phone 999, leaving the rest of us time to hide the Montesa, and concoct a story that wouldn't get us into

The tossy bloke on the blue bike can also ride a monocycle, is a full-time member of the Campaign for Real Ale, and, once a year, he juggles and does a fire-breathing act at the Bristol folk festival.

trouble. Eventually Tim reappeared, waving, way above. The ambulance was on its way, then? Er, no, actually. Tim's mum had suspected it was a 'practical joke', and had insisted on seeing the broken leg for herself before alerting the emergency services. By the time she'd clambered down the bank in her high heels, another 20 minutes had passed, and Peter's face had gone a bit green.

"Um, yes, his leg's broken, you'd better go and phone 999 immediately," she said. Tim disappeared for the second time.

Three quarters of an hour later and Peter was finally being stretchered away by professionals, his lower left leg by now the size, shape and consistency of a severely clubbed baby seal. The superb denouement for all us other kids, though, was that not only had a semi-delirious Peter called Tim's mum a 'stupid effing bitch' to her face after she asked how he felt, but that she was also unable to climb out of the quarry unaided. (Tim's dad had to come and help her when he got back from work.) Excellent. And, of course, this whole episode also makes me an expert on motocross games...

## Moto Racer

Unfortunately *Moto Racer* isn't really a motocross game at all: or at least half of it isn't, which is a shame. But I'll get to that later, after the basic genre and structure explanations, which are as follows:

**Once you've beaten the eighth track, you get two further options – the courses become reversible or you can ride miniature versions of the bikes.**



Sega's *TT Racer*? That's the stance here. *Moto Racer* is a pure arcade experience with the emphasis placed on the speed of the proceedings. The game moves like greased lightning and, should you own a 3D accelerator card and/or a Cray 9000 NASA computer, actually manages not to be unplayably jerky while doing so. I, however, played it on a basic P133 and eventually plumped for lo-res.

The arcade game structure will be as familiar as the arcade visuals. There are eight tracks, right? But not all can be accessed immediately. First, you might want just to get the hang of things, so luckily you can race against the timer on four of the tracks – or against yourself, thanks to the 'ghost bike' that mimics your previous best laps. Next up is the single race, meaning you race against either 12 or 24 computer-controlled racers – and again over only four of the tracks. Compris? So, you want to see the other four tracks? Guess what: select Championship mode, place third or better in each consecutive bout, and the entire *Moto Racer* world becomes your oyster – or not, if you're crap.

Oh yes, and once you've beaten the eighth track, two further options come into play. First, the courses become





(Above) Yes, I know this looks very exciting, but playing it doesn't really feel very 'motorbikey'. It's more like being in a weird two-wheeled car which, er, leans left and right a bit (or something).

(Above right) The Chen twins, blind since birth, were nevertheless keen competitors in the Chinese Motocross League.

reversible (properly reversible, mind you, none of that silly Japanese mirror mode); and second, you can ride miniature versions of the bikes you've become used to. (For some reason I find myself thinking of *Ridge Racer Revolution* on the PlayStation here, which did a similar thing with the cars. But maybe I'm just being cynical.)

## How does it play, though?

Now I can get back to the point I raised earlier: *Moto Racer* isn't just a motocross game – it's also a superbike game, as you'll have noticed from the screenshots. So, therefore, the races alternate. First you're in a tarmac-hugging mega-speed road race on a Honda Fireblade thingummyjig, then you're in a motocross race on a trial bike doofer. Then you're back on the superbike. Then back to the trial bike. And so on. Boo!

Why 'boo'? Well, what I'm trying to say (and it's about time), is that the super-fast road races are actually mind-numbingly boring: but, in Championship mode, to get to each successive motocross race, you also need to complete a road race. This is a double bummer, because as well as being boring they're also extremely difficult because the computer riders are gifted with ridiculously fast machines.

Another point is that in the motocross parts, while airborne, you get the chance to perform 'stunts', yet the end of race 'score' doesn't acknowledge your prowess. So why bother putting the stunt stuff in? It's strange, but...

## I have a theory

I could be way off the mark here, but I get the feeling that somebody decided half-way through production of what was going to be a pure motocross game with extra 'stunt awards' that players would become bored if they weren't travelling at three squillion mph at some point. Thus, some bright spark suggested the inclusion of the powerbike bits. Like I say,

though, I could be way off the mark... but if I'm not, it's a compromise that hasn't done anybody any favours. Anyway, even if I *am* wrong, 50 per cent of the game, although blindingly fast, is, ironically, a mega yawn.

What about the remaining 50 per cent? The motocross parts are fun, sure, but it would've been much better if the 'stunt' stuff had been implemented to completion. (You might have placed fifth in an actual race, for example, but thanks to points racked up during a triple look-mum-no-hands jump, you get shunted up to third. You know?)

Still, if you have a serial cable, modem and/or networking facility, it's worth mentioning the multi-player mode, which'll be quite a laugh on the motocross tracks. But as for the superbike courses, my advice is don't bother making the connection because a zillion car games do a far better job. *Moto Racer* is only novel because there aren't any other motorbike games available. And also remember this state of affairs is due to change. Ho hum. Missed opportunity. **Z**



(Top right) An airborne moment in the motocross mode, and it's in these situations that you have time to perform amazing 'stunts' (hands off handlebars, leg sticking out at rakish angle, raising eyebrows and flaring nostrils, etc).

## In Perspective

There's not a lot you can compare *Moto Racer* to, apart from *Road Rash* from Electronic Arts and the now ancient and long-forgotten *Cyclemania* from Accolade.

Moto Racer

Road Rash

Cyclemania

## Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster AWE32

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, joypad

Note: 90Mb hard disk space required (5Mb minimum)



## Score

The motocross parts are fun, but the intrusive superbike bits just play like a car game, and a pretty yawny car game at that.

77

Price: ETBC

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts

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# C&C: Counter Strike



After a nightmarish encounter with the C&C add-on *Covert Operations*, Chris Anderson cautiously approaches the mission disk for *Red Alert*.



MMM, LET ME SEE, WHAT COULD YOU possibly be expecting from an add-on disk for *Red Alert*? How about a new plot, played out as a campaign over a long series of missions, and maybe a few new units to spice the campaign up a bit and make multi-player games more exciting? And then, of course, C&C just wouldn't be the same without those fantastic cut-scenes to set the scene before and after a mission, so yes, we'll have some more of that please.

Having stated my wish-list it's time to have a look at the C&C: *Counterstrike* package. Well, you can forget the new campaign for a start. What we've got here is 16 new single-player missions (eight Allied and eight Soviet) and a few new units (tesla tanks, elite super soldiers, wonder dogs and superjets).



The underground missions return in C&C: *Counterstrike*.

And that's about it really. There's no new campaign, and no new cut-scenes either – you simply load up the missions in whatever order you like and attempt to complete the objective at hand. That's not to say that the missions are boring, or that they're any better or worse than the ones in the original *Red Alert* – it's just that while playing them you may feel as though you're ploughing through them for the sake of it as opposed to progressing through a structured campaign.

On the plus side, the new missions are nowhere near as difficult as the ones in *Covert Operations* (with the exception of the first mission, which is a bit of a nightmare), but of course that just means you'll get through them all the more quicker, which leaves... what?

## Nothing

Well, not quite nothing. Let's have a look at what you get for £14.99 apart from the 16 new missions: eight new audio tracks (whoop-de-doo), a *Red Alert* desktop theme pack, the latest upgrades for *Red Alert* (fair enough), the most recent version of chat@Westwood (ermmmmm), a code in the box to unlock the four secret ant missions (which admittedly are kind of cool) and over 100 new multi-player missions.

Hang on a minute, 100 new multi-player missions? So you can play in skirmish mode or on the Net using all the new units, right? Fab. Er, 'fraid not. Westwood, in their infinite wisdom, have decided not to include the new units in the multi-player levels. Even as I write this there are people on the Net complaining about this very fact in no uncertain terms. So in a nutshell then, apart from the gimmicky extras, we've got 16 new missions, four new units (which you can only use in some of the new missions) and 100 new multi-player maps which would have benefited greatly from the inclusion of some new toys to play with.

And this is why I can't cite C&C: *Counterstrike* as an essential purchase. However, it is only fifteen quid, and if all you're looking for is another short blast of what made the original the classic it most deservedly is, as well as 100 new multi-player levels (Internet and skirmish mode), then you can't really go wrong. 2

(Above) The morse code in the box unlocks the secret giant ant missions... (Above left) ...and here's one I made earlier. (Above top) The new Soviet tanks.

## In Perspective

It wouldn't really be fair to compare C&C: *Counterstrike* to anything other than *Red Alert* itself and *Covert Ops*, which is the only other C&C add-on available. Unfortunately it loses out to both – *Red Alert* has a full campaign and *Covert Ops* offers more of a long-term challenge, if only because it's a total bitch to complete.

C&C: *Counterstrike*

C&C: *Red Alert*

C&C: *Covert Operations*

## Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486DX/66 (Pentium for Windows 95)

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Note: 28.8 modem required for Internet play



## Score

It's disappointing that there aren't any new units for multi-player mode, but it's still good value at this price.



Price: £14.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Virgin Interactive

Telephone: 0171 368 2255

Website: <http://www.vie.co.uk>

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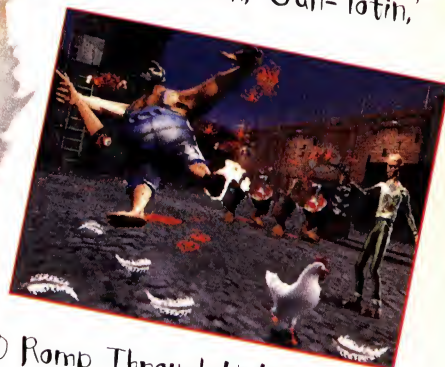
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# Interstate 76

Unfortunately *Interstate 76* failed to attain Recommended or Classic status. However, **Duncan MacDonald** thinks that in this case there should be an additional score for 'grooviness', so read on and award extra points as you see fit...



AVE A GOOD LOOK AT THE PANEL BELOW – it's the brilliant intro to *Interstate 76*, and it sets the superb flavour of the game to come. It's essentially a mission-based car game cum shoot 'em up in so far as (a) there are missions, (b) you drive a car, and (c) you're loaded up with cannons, rockets and all sorts of other kit. The basic story is a sort of post-apocalyptic Mad Max

affair, but set in the States rather than Oz. The baddy (the one who shot your sister at the beginning, while you were busy listening to the groovy funktrack) is after the last great American oil reserve, and he has a gang of about 17 trillion car driving hoodlums to help him. You, on the other hand – as you'll have gleaned from the opening credits – have only yourself, Taurus and Skeeter. Oh well, at least you own the grooviest waistcoats!



The whole look and feel of *I-76* is quite unique, thanks to the almost brutal use of quite angular polygons. If only it moved a little quicker...

## Interstate 76 – the intro

It's cards on the table time: as I've explained in my review, *Interstate 76* doesn't quite cut the mustard as a completely playable game. That said, it's well worth talking you through one of the best opening sequences in the entire history of the universe – it really is that good.

This is the 'hubcap cam' of a car driven by a white chick, who's being chased and machine-gunned at. The camera angles change with gusto, until eventually she crashes into a factory warehouse doofer. She clambors out of her totalled car, sticks a clip in her pistol, and prepares to 'greet' her adversary...

Unfortunately, he 'greet's her first (from behind, with a bullet through the lung). Oh no! But then a really groovy black bloke wearing yellow flares turns up. He tenderly cradles the terminally injured babe in his arms, her dying words being that her brother must be told. Then she pops her clog-ettes.

Cue the *Interstate 76* logo screen. But, more importantly, cue some seriously '70s wah-wah guitar. Whukka chaka chaka, whukka chaka chaka. Think the theme from *Shaft*, but better, much better. And then the bass and drums kick in! Whukka chaka boom, chaka whoom, chaka whukka chaka whoom...

Now the actual credits begin, in true '70s fashion (naturally). It's *Starsky And Hutch* meets *The Professionals*, if you like. (Whukka chaka, whukka chaka, chaka chaka whukka.) Here's Groove Champion, the bloke you'll be playing, and whose sister was killed at the beginning...

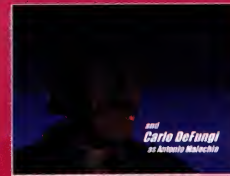


And this (whukka chaka) is Taurus! (Chaka whukka, chaka whukka!) Yup, it's the really groovy bloke we saw before. He used to be your sister's partner, but now she's dead he's become your partner. Yup, it's buddy cop time, and the wah-wah guitar is getting louder and louder...

Whukka whukka chaka chaka chaka. Eh? What's this? It's, er, apparently your sister, Jade. But she's supposed to be dead, isn't she? (Chaka chaka.) So how come she's got such a big credit? (Whukka chaka.) Hmmm, maybe that 'lung shot' didn't finish her off after all. But I'm only guessing here.

(Chaka whukka, whukka chaka!) Look, it's Skeeter. What a banjo-playing twat. Nevertheless, he's the bloke who's going to be constantly fixing your car with whatever comes to hand in the middle of nowhere, so the fact that he's made up of 'P' chromosomes matters not a jot.

Whukka chaka, chaka chaka. It's the baddy. (Chaka whukka.) That's right, the one who 'killed' your sister. (Chaka chaka.) Bastard!!! (Chaka chaka.) You and Taurus (with occasional help from Skeeter) have to destroy his empire. (Whukka chaka, whukka chaka, chaka chaka, etc...)







In-game graphical detail is high, but it's a compromise between graphical lushness and seeing things on-screen move at a speed at which you can play the game at.



## Bookends...

Here's what the *Interstate 76* manual says about the in-game cut-scenes: "[It] provides players with one fluid cinematic experience by creating scripted animated sequences with the same art style as the simulation. Serving as bookends to each mission, the sequences – which feature unique and engaging characters – allow the story to unfold by providing players with mission briefings and debriefings."

So what's new there? I'll tell you, and the clue is in the words "animated sequences with the same art style as the simulation". Yes, the plot parts of the game and the 'play' parts of the game blend seamlessly into one, thanks to everything – including the actors – being polygonised. It works a treat, or rather it would work a treat if you didn't have to turn off all the in-game detail to get anything approaching a workable frame rate.

## Oh no...

Oh yes. Sorry. It's a crying shame, it really is, because *Interstate 76* could have been a real contender. The cheesy '70s storyline, acting and direction are brilliant – as are the missions. In terms of 'interactive movie', this works. And the music? Whukka chakka chukka! It's so seriously groovy that words fail me (I wonder what make the wah-wah pedal is? A really old Colorsound one maybe?).

But I'm drifting from the point. *Interstate 76* fails to be a classic, at the end of the day, because the in-game graphics, once toggled, suck. It's one of those cases, however, where you find yourself asking 'But do I really care? Things are so potentially excellent could I not overlook the shortcomings? Could I not get used to the crap visuals?' Unfortunately in

this particular case, you can't. I tried and I tried, but eventually gave it up as a bad job. It's a case of the proceedings being clear and good-looking but unplayably jerky, or bland and empty (and, er, still a little bit jerky to be honest). Plus – and this is even worse – the mountain scenery polygons sort of continually 'update themselves', even when you're right next to them... the net affect being that there you are jerking about in blandsville, while the mountain up ahead is going all wibbly. (I take it those are technical terms – Ed?)

## Oh no, guilt, guilt...

I hate having to give *Interstate 76* a lowish score, because originality really should be rewarded, as should the fact that the playing areas are so large and that you can drive wherever you like. Um. How about, er, we applaud *Interstate 76*? No? Go on, please, let's get to our feet and give a hearty round of applause before I award the score. I'll clap first. (Clap clap clap clap.) Come on, clap with me. (Clap clap clap clap.) Awww, come on, please... (Clap clap clap clap.) Bastard. Still, at least you get the drift, eh, even if you won't clap. (Phew, thank god that's over – A Reader)

*Interstate 76* is just about the most groovesome car game ever, but unfortunately it sort of shoots itself in the driving foot. So, um, I suppose it's back to the bloody carnage of *Carmageddon* then (which from now on I'm going to play while listening to old Shalamar singles)... **Z**



If ever there was a case for a game needing the help of a 3D accelerator card, it's *Interstate 76*. The developers maintain that they are currently working on a patch that will take advantage of Microsoft's D3D, but we've yet to see anything.

## In Perspective

If *Interstate 76*'s game engine worked as well as *Carmageddon*'s, then... well, oh happy, happy, joy, joy. Sadly, this just isn't the case. The poor relation here is *NFS2* which, by comparison, is rather damp and squidgy.

Interstate 76

Carmageddon

Need For Speed 2

Quarantine 2

Screamer 2

## Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick



## Score

Lots of agro and lots of afro. Unfortunately lots of jerkovision as well.



Price: £39.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Activision

Telephone: 01895 456700

Website: <http://www.activision.com>

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# Terracide



With the most embarrassing quote of his life having made it from the *Terracide* Blueprint to the game's advertisements (*Something about tongues, wasn't it? – Ed*), we thought we'd give **Paul Presley** the chance to top himself. If he writes the review for us first, of course.



ABOUT SEVEN YEARS AGO I NOTICED THAT PC gaming was evolving at a rate of knots. As a staff writer on some half-arsed computer rag I was given the task of reviewing Wing

Commander. A large red 'Warning!' sign leapt out at me when I opened the box, telling me that unless I had the kind of computer system that was used to control the Space Shuttle at the time, I might as well forget about running the game in 'full monty' mode. Welcome to the future, I remember thinking, it's going to be complicated. Never again would a PC game run without any fuss and nonsense during installation.

Things have improved over the past few years. Windows 95 aimed to 'standardise' games programming methods, and most games now pretty much run simply by putting the CD in the drive. But now that's been shot to hell with *Terracide*: it's no longer memory configurations we have to mess around with, it's hardware cards. Sometimes I envy PlayStation owners. Sometimes.

## But first...

Before I start on all that, let me tell you about the game. *Terracide* is the first in a whole slurry of *Descent*-style titles (well, three actually) that are coming your way between now and the magical time of year called Microsoft Christmas 97™ (I understand they're sponsoring it this year). The basic plot-line is that a happy-go-lucky band of space colonists left the Earth several centuries previously, found it tricky going,



(Above) The notorious Pentium bug takes a nasty turn.

(Left) What every chic psycho-mutant will be wearing this nuclear winter.

mutated themselves into weird psycho-creatures and thought it would be amusing to come back and kill us all. Like, dead.

Naturally, stopping them isn't a case of just throwing everything we've got at their approaching spaceships, as we're hopelessly outclassed in the weapons department. Instead, the powers that be have decided that the old *Star Wars* line of defence is the only way out for mankind, so off we go in one small fighter craft to penetrate each of the ships and blow them up from within (making sure we get out first, obviously). Lone heroes don't grow on trees you know.

## So, graphic cards

*Terracide* is the first game I've come across (although it's unlikely to be the last) that's Graphic Card Intensive – it supports just about every accelerator card available and has been designed with Direct3D in mind. Consequently, it looks absolutely bloody wonderful.

Or, at least, so I thought. You see, while playing it in the PC Zone offices on a machine equipped with the 3Dfx card, half the people that stopped to watch said complimentary things about the graphics; but the other half weren't quite so enamoured. "Too flat," they said. "Not very realistic. Too angular." And I can see their point. Compared to *Quake*, for example, it does look very, well... flat. There's a lack of grainy realism. There's plenty of light-sourcing and certainly a lot of darkness in places, but there's a distinct absence of believable shadows. As a result, everything looks very polished and shiny, and at times it's very obvious you're looking at textured polygons instead of realistic wall surfaces and the like – you can see one kind of texture end at the edge of a polygon and then another one take off at the start of the next, rather than a smoothly curved transition between the two.

Of course, the flip side is that despite being angular and shiny, *Terracide* looks and moves extremely well. There's no pixellisation when you get up close to a textured surface – everything's smoother than silk in terms of movement and object animation, chrome surfaces reflect superbly and so on and on. Nearly all the effects on offer from the new



(Above) The awe-inspiring majesty that is Earth.

(Left) Outside the ships, *Terracide* takes on an *X-Wing* kind of bent.







Some of the strangely shaped ships shooting sharply through space, swiftly signalling 'sayonara' for, er, Earth. (Terrible - Ed)



Aargh, run! It's a giant killer Liquorice allsort!

graphic cards work exactly as promised. It's a bit like going back to the early days of software programming again - Simis are the first team to have flexed their muscles with the new systems, and have achieved commendable results. It's just that you know the graphics potential envelope has

some cases it was practically unplayable - jerkier than Mohammed Ali and about as visually clear as a glass of Thames water. I'm sure it'll probably run okay with a higher processor and a bit more RAM in your graphics card but, to be totally honest, I wouldn't really recommend *Terracide* without some kind of 3D card backing it up.

### Take it for a spin

One other area that gives cause for concern is the control method - you really do have to get used to it. Despite a plethora of tuning options it's hard to find a setting that works comfortably with the mouse or keyboard - unless you like loads of impromptu spinning and rebounding off walls, that is. Joystick play is better, but to get a real sense of control you'll need a highly sensitive one; you should find that any decent flightstick will do the trick, and after a while you ought to start getting the hang of things. Again, as with the graphics, you'll get a lot more out of the game if you're powerfully toolled up.

Interestingly, features such as auto-levelling and auto-pitching, which reorient your ship after you spin or bank, both help and hinder. They're really annoying for delicate sniping work because they keep moving your sights, but they

***Terracide supports just about every accelerator card available and has been designed especially with Direct3D in mind. Consequently, it looks absolutely bloody wonderful.***

yet to be pushed to its full extent and that in the next few months the visuals are going to improve even more as people start to get to grips with what's possible.

### I'm not a flash git though...

...and you don't have one of these graphical beasts in your machine. Well, don't worry, because the game comes with its own software routines - the non-hardware versions of *Terracide* actually look much closer to the *Quake* levels of grainy realism than the accelerated ones.

Having said that, you'll need loads of processing power to get it to run nicely. I tried the native version on a P120 with 32Mb of RAM at various different resolutions and in

come in handy if you want to stop yourself from behaving like a pinball when you're zooming along a twisty corridor.

### Three of a kind

*Terracide* is a good game, but it's not always apparent while you're playing. There's little to distinguish it from the original tunnelly *Doom* game other than its technical advancements. *Descent 3* will probably take advantage of the same hardware (as will Probe's as-yet-unnamed *Descent* game; see Blueprint, page 54), it remains to be seen if it will offer any new gameplay. *Terracide* is more of a stop-gap, but the fact that it's out now helps - it comes down to how patient you are. And, as I said, how much oomph is under your PC's bonnet. 2



(Above) Giant fans make life tricky with realistic wind effects. (Far right) Sometimes you just get a bad feeling about a room.

## In Perspective

So is *Terracide* better than *Descent 2*? It's a tricky question to answer... although *Terracide* is technically far superior, *Descent 2* has just that little bit more going for it in the gameplay department.

Terracide

Descent 2

Tunnel B1

## Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, joystick, keyboard



## Score

The better your equipment, the better the game.



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**MICRO PROSE**



# Review ZONE Extra!

You've leafed through the main reviews section, so now read about the games that we were still desperate to tell you about.

## ROBERTA WILLIAMS ANTHOLOGY

Retro-adventuring: is it value for money? Sierra have trawled through their back catalogue and bunged the entire canon of Roberta Williams adventures into one handy package. Here's what you get for your money – full versions of a load of very old text-based adventures which run on an Apple II emulator (*Mystery House*,

*House* (the first Sierra adventure game, included here) understands the 'F' and 'C' words, and will chuck you out of the game should you type them in. So now you know.

Charlie Brooker

Publisher: Sierra  
Price: £34.99  
Tel: 0118 9209100

59

Score: 0 of 158

Sound: on

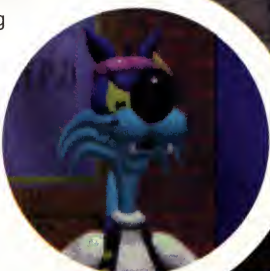


If you really want to play adventure games that look like this then buy the *Roberta Williams Anthology*.

*Wizard And The Princess, Mission: Asteroid, Time Zone, Dark Crystal*), full versions of some slightly newer adventures (*King's Quest 1 to 7*, the *Lara Bow* games, and *Mixed-Up Mother Goose*), and a 'demo version' of one very new one (*Phantasmagoria*). Sounds incredible? Sounds like a big bag of adventuring joy? Well... the problem is that the early games are little more than curios – nigh-on unplayable ones at that (well, they were written in 1928 or so), and many of the mid-period titles are beset with technical problems (they haven't been patched, re-hashed, or re-written, and subsequently don't always run properly on modern systems). You're unlikely to want to go back and play anything pre-*King's Quest V* anyway unless you're a weirdo. Ultimately, this entire package is of interest only to Sierra completists or self-styled videogame historians. Oh, and by the way, *Mystery*

## FIRO AND KLAUD

It's a bit of a clumsy name for a game, isn't it? *Firo And Klawd* are a crime-busting duo with a difference: *Firo* is an orang-utan, *Klawd* is a cat. They patrol the streets of New Yak (har har) wiping out bad guys and jumping around and stuff. It doesn't seem too bad for the first 30 seconds or so – the graphics are okay, the isometric-perspective action is pleasantly nippy – but it soon becomes apparent that irritation is going to win out over entertainment. It's hard to aim properly at the enemies (who seem to respawn every three seconds), know where you're



(Above left) Well, this shot should be easy now they've built this training bridge. (Above right) Jack gets a touch miffed at his last shot.



supposed to be going, and even harder to jump onto platforms. Worse still, there seems to be little or no structure to the gameplay itself, so it all feels rather aimless. A shame, because I rather warmed to the idea of playing a shotgun-toting ape. Maybe next time, eh?

Charlie Brooker

Publisher: BMG/Interactive Studios Ltd  
Price: £29.99  
Tel: 0171 973 0011

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## JACK NICKLAUS 4

There's a certain aging golf game that I'm particularly fond of. I shan't mention its name again as people who can't see further than the *Links* or *PGA* mobs tend to get upset. However, even though I have to admit that it's looking somewhat dated these days, it still plays a better game of golf than anything else out there (and believe me, I've played them all, even the real thing). The reason I bring it up is that *Jack Nicklaus 4* isn't a game about golf. It's a game about golf courses. That is, it tries to be both a golf game and a course designer, but the actual game section really isn't much cop.

Let's face it, it's pretty hard to mess up a golf game these days. They all use the standard three-click swingometer (first pioneered in *That Other Game*

I might add, only to be laughed at because it wasn't straight like the original *PGA Tour Golf*'s was. Now they all use it), so why Accolade felt the need to make it so bizarrely stylised that it's almost unusable here I really couldn't tell you.

Aiming your shot is cumbersome, as is putting. There's no real way of reading the greens and the grid overlay is next to useless, meaning that three-putting on even the shortest of holes is almost an inevitability.

On the plus side though, it looks lovely. Truly. Although since fifty per cent of the game is actually concerned with the creation of courses, this is only to be expected. Nicklaus himself has become quite a prolific course designer in real life and this level of creative commitment is reflected here. The designer is simple to use yet comprehensive enough to allow for some really nice designs to emerge with only a few hours' effort.

So basically it's a game of two halves (to borrow a metaphor from a completely different sport). A fairly iffy golf game combined with a pretty decent editor. You just have to ask yourself how badly you want to design golf courses.

Paul Presley

Publisher: Accolade  
Price: £TBA  
Website: <http://www.accolade.com>

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The graphics and appeal of playing a gun-toting ape were sadly not enough to transform *F&K* into a worthwhile gaming experience.





## GLORIANA

The strangely subtle *Gloriana* surprised me this month, but then I never envisaged a Christopher Columbus-style trading game ever appealing to me in the way that this game did. Admittedly I was first lured by the glorious graphics (tart that I am), but it soon became clear after mere minutes of play that this game would be a strangely compulsive experience. And guess what? It was.

The shell is a simple mix of goods trading and real-time combat, though the combat sections don't really come into their own until quite a way in. What makes the game interesting, though, is the way in which an initially simple plotline can expand into a whole separate adventure in itself – constantly surprising on the way. The initial few hours of play are quite sprightly, but could be viewed by some as quite dull



EA's *Gloriana* proved to be a compulsive experience.

because there's a bit of to-ing and fro-ing as you try to build up your bank account. Stick with it and the game will open up.

Aside from some dodgy video, and the fact that anyone caught playing *Gloriana* is instantly stung by the stigma attached to liking 'boat games', everything else is pretty much spot on. Out of everything, the fluidity of the interface impressed me the most – it really helps unfurl the story and never hinders when there's business to be done. ("My God – this man openly confesses to liking 'boat games'!" – A Reader)

Paul Mallinson

Publisher: Electronic Arts  
Price: £39.99  
Tel: 01753 549442

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## RIOT

How many futuristic sports games have we seen come and go in the past? Quite a blummen few, I can tell you. No matter how good the motion capture is, how 'atmospheric' the

It might not look that bad, but *Riot* is far from entertaining.

## PC Zone almost recommends

## FOOTBALL MASTERS

It's getting to be a very crowded market. Gremlin's 'all-new' *Premier Manager 97* is out next month, as is EA Sports' *FIFA Manager*. The next *USM* isn't far off and an updated and 'enhanced' version of *Championship Manager 2* is due for release in August, along with new titles from both Ocean and Anco.



At the moment, it's pretty much horses for courses. If you want stats, workman-like, accessible presentation and uncanny realism you play *CM2*. If you want to be visually impressed and dabble in the financial side of things, then you play *Premier Manager*. What the new titles will bring to the genre is anyone's guess, though it's clear that ESP Software have looked long and hard at other games on the market and at least attempted to take things further. In *Football Masters* you're given much greater control over tactics and training than in other games, and while the presentation is sometimes a little confusing, it does represent a step forward in terms of managerial control. Another worthy plus point is the facility to tailor the features depending on how much you're concerned with the financial affairs of your club. Depending on your preference you can either play the game as a tactician, financial dealer or, if you're up to it, as both, which will ultimately give you the greatest control and, presumably, success.

Although the overall look of *Football Masters* is a

little dated, it's not what it looks like, but what's inside that counts. As far as stats and AI go, there are a few things amiss. In my first season, Arsenal's Viera went after just a couple of games to Leeds for just over a million quid and Liverpool's Jamie Rednapp jumped ship to Everton shortly after for a similar figure. A look at some Premier league first team line-ups caused a few eyebrows to fly skyward as Arsenal were seen to be playing with reserve striker Paul Read up front and both Wright and Bergkamp on the bench. Across many of the teams, players were consistently being played out of position (Colchester's back four consisted of four right-backs, despite there being other first team defenders in the squad). And even though I had a battery of tactical features at my disposal (man-marking and aggression level etc), my team seemed to be wildly inconsistent despite my best efforts.

Fans of the genre will know that in footie management games realism and being able to suspend that sense of disbelief is everything. As soon as something happens that alerts the player to the fact that the environment they're operating within is not quite right (for example, when any of the above anomalies happen) then alarm bells start ringing, you start looking for and noticing other things that aren't quite right and it all starts to go a bit pear-shaped.

In all fairness, *Football Masters* features some nice ideas, but is ultimately let down by an awkward interface and erratic AI. As with most games in the genre, the more time you put in, the more you get out of it – the encyclopaedia is a particularly nice feature, but like so many other features within the game, it could be implemented and presented better.

With so many other titles coming out over the next few months, it would be hard to recommend *Football Masters*. Personally, I'm going to stick with *CM2*.

Jeremy Wells

Publisher: ESP Software  
Contact: 01702 434600  
Price: £29.99

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(Main picture) It's a tank game, here's a tank. Happy?  
(Right) Get used to this particular sight.  
(Below right) I spy with my little eye something beginning with 'T'.

sound effects, or how good the AI, futuristic sports games are usually portrayed as a cross between the TV show *Gladiators* and the worst the varied US sports TV channels have on offer to all chronic insomniacs with cable TV installed in their bedrooms. *Riot*, I'm afraid, falls into this trap.

Despite the fact that the control system isn't really that bad – hardly intuitive, but not obstructive – and that initially it seems like it could be a bit of fun, *Riot*'s yawnsome concept and gaudy presentation do nothing to keep the player interested and you come away with nothing but a cheap thrill and a sore head. And the thrill doesn't last long.

Playing with a decent gamepad helps, especially if you want to get good at the game (which is quite plausible if you're immune to the embarrassment of controlling a bunch of shoulderpad-laden ponces mincing around on a big dartboard throwing lightbulbs around), but I can't really see even the league, tournament and multi-player network options tempting anyone to go back to *Riot* after the 'average detector' has sussed out that the whole thing is actually log.

Paul Mallinson

**Publisher:** Psygnosis  
**Price:** £39.99  
**Tel:** 0151 282 3000

50

## M1A2 ABRAMS

This baby centres on America's main battle tank. You have the option of controlling a single tank, platoon or company. Add to this multi-player



options, three theatres of war and 3D graphics and you have yourself a real winner of a game, no?

Well, no, actually. The graphics are, how to put this politely... a bit crap. The three theatres of war consist of two green billiard tables (Ukraine and Bosnia) and a brown billiard table (the Middle East). With the exception of the odd tree and pylon it's all a bit plain.

Now this wouldn't be so bad if the game was a rip-roaring barrel of fun – but it isn't. This is the basic mission structure: drive to waypoint, see brown blobs (the enemy), shoot at brown blobs, carry on driving. Get the picture? All the excitement of a Sunday morning drive plus graphics that remind me why I ditched my Amiga.

If you're a slaving fan boy of tank games then I suppose you could find something in this to enjoy – hey go ahead, it's a free country after all. For me though I think I'll try something a little more fun, like gouging out my eyes with a rusty spoon.

Paul Ditta

**Publisher:** Interactive Magic  
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65

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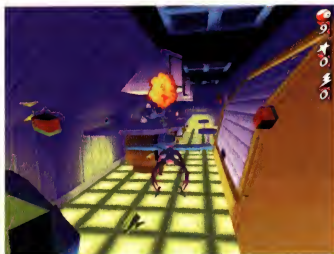
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**Banzai Bug** – well, it sounded like a good idea at the time.

## BANZAI BUG

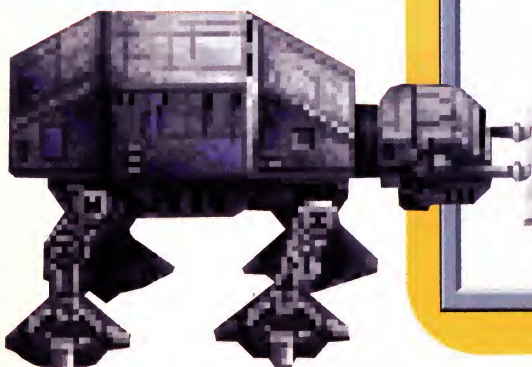
Flies do all sorts of things which don't really lend themselves too well to videogame interpretation. Fun though a game in which you get to vomit onto dog turd and then eat it may sound, it's unlikely to see the light of day in our lifetime. In the meantime, if you want to know what it's like being 'a fly on the wall', this is your best bet.

Yes, dear reader, *Banzai Bug* is perhaps the closest we'll ever get to playing a 'fly simulator'. Aimed fairly and squarely at younger players, it's best described as an 'explore 'em up' – the idea is to fly around various locations in search of edible nuggets, then escape to the next level. Stylish visuals throughout (although without a 3D card they tend to chug along at the higher settings) and impressive use of sound effects give it a polished air, but sadly the game itself quickly becomes as repetitive as a machine-gun loaded with tedious bullets. Try as it might, it can't fool the kids, who'll merely raise an eyebrow and then return to the gib-heavy action of *Quake* and company.

**Charlie Brooker**

**Publisher:** Grolier Interactive  
**Tel:** 01865 264800  
**Price:** £TBA

63



## PC Zone almost recommends



## YODA STORIES

Remember *Indiana Jones And His Desktop Adventures*? If ever there was a misunderstood product out there, that certainly was one. Not really a game, not really a screensaver... just sort of half-way between the two. *Yoda Stories* is something that follows in the same vein but errs more toward the 'game' side of things. Think adventure games circa 1984, think *Zelda* on the Gameboy, think simple, randomly generated, top-down scrolling adventure game with lots of extremely cute-looking *Star Wars* imagery. Lob in some fantastic sound effects and a few little add-ons to "Star Wars-ify" (is that a word?) your desktop and you've got a good idea what this

little package is all about.

It's not so much a proper game, it's more a sort of 'interactive toy' – which apart from a completely horrible expression is something that we're seeing more of these days. The adventures that the game generates will only last you an hour and are simple 'do this, do that and then find such and such an object' type affairs and are a great distraction if you're sitting at your desk at lunch-time rather than sitting down the pub with other people who have friends... and lives.

This isn't the kind of thing you'd buy to use at home. It's a definite 'work PC' toy, so don't expect anything too deep. To add a bit of extra value, LucasArts have seen fit to throw a copy of the exquisite 'Making Magic' *Star Wars* multi-media thingy – so you can watch how they added the new bits to the trilogy. This is a pretty interesting thing to click through if you're a *Star Wars* fan, but it's really the sort of product that you look at maybe twice and then immediately forget about. However, don't think of *Yoda* as a game and you'll love it.

**John Davison**

**Publisher:** LucasArts/VIE  
**Price:** £19.99  
**Tel:** 0171 368 2255

79

It may look rather cute on your desktop, but don't expect *Yoda Stories* to keep you up into the night. It's an interesting little distraction and nothing more.





## SCARAB

Blimey, this sounds like a bit of alright: 'Engage in fierce combat across seven fully-textured 3D arenas that include elevators, moving platforms, tunnels, and traps.' And wait there's more, you get to take control of three enormous robots with 40 different weapon systems at your disposal, and if you get bored with the single-player game, you can take on six of your mates across a network, or even on the Internet.

There's one slight snag however: the game is absolutely awful, which kind of ruins things a bit. Let's start with the ugly, angular graphics for the buildings and robots, and move on slowly to the cumbersome and decidedly unintuitive interface, finally arriving at the most ridiculous plot for a big robot game ever (aliens in robot suits clobbering each other in an Egyptian setting, hoping to become one of the great 'Gods' or something equally pathetic). You may have gathered I don't like it very much. I don't like it very much at all, in fact. You, however, may well find it has hidden depths which I haven't discovered. (Yeah right - Ed)

Chris Anderson

**Publisher:** Electronic Arts  
**Price:** £34.99  
**Tel:** 01753 549442

40

(Right) In the future, all robots will have pointy ears and prance about the place like Wayne Sleep with a turnip up his rear end.

(Below) Well, those air to ground anti-tent missiles certainly seem to have done the trick. And they were such good value at only £4.99 for half a dozen. How do they do it for the price? I guess we'll never know.



## GRIDRUN

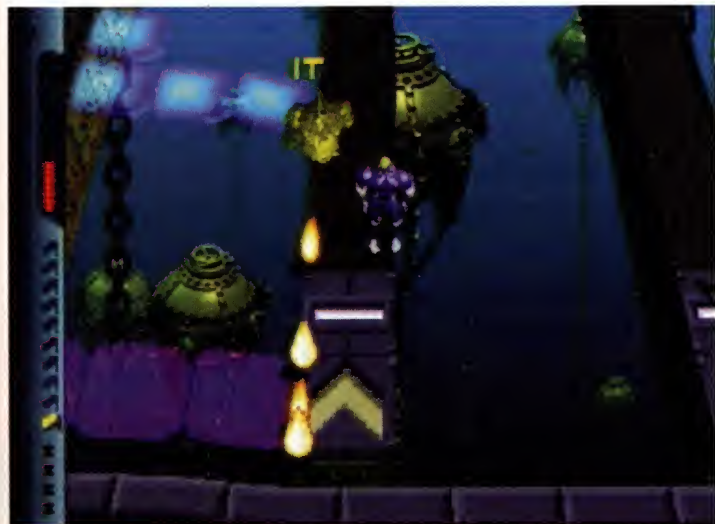
Your first thought when you start playing *Gridrun* is "Yuk! It's playground 'It', but with the additional task of collecting flags. How dull!" The intro



gives provides the storyline, but it's not essential to the gameplay

Your task is to capture flags while outwitting your monster opponent, while trying to progress through the 15 worlds to get to the Empress Vorga. To begin with you're neutral. If you capture a flag before your opponent, you're no longer 'it', which means that you can't continue capturing flags. If the monster touches you it's his turn to collect flags and you don't get another go until you touch him back. If he collects the allocated number of flags for that level, YOU LOSE!

*Gridrun* is fun for a time and quite difficult at first, but once you get the hang of it it's rather monotonous. It's



a bit like *Lemmings* in that after a while you're not sure if you can be bothered to save the little critters any more and you resort to blowing them up instead.

Speed is essential, as are quick reflexes. Although this game supports the use of the keyboard, I wouldn't recommend it - it makes your hand ache and it's easy to hit the wrong key at vital moments.

I probably wouldn't buy *Gridrun* just

from reading the blurb on the box, but like so many puzzle games you'll find that it's surprisingly compulsive once you get stuck in. I don't think it will prove to be an enduring favourite, but it was nice while the urge lasted.

Katie Calder

**Publisher:** Virgin  
**Price:** £34.99  
**Tel:** 0171 368 2255

55

As you can see from the screenshots, *Gridrun* shows its PlayStation roots quite clearly. The game has obviously been written with console owners in mind, and for that reason it's never going to satisfy hardened PC strategists who are used to playing games that present much more of a challenge.



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# Tech ZONE



Two years ago several American companies were loudly proclaiming that Virtual Reality was about to take over the world. It didn't. So what went wrong? More to the point, does anyone care? **Chris Anderson** investigates.

## Virtual Reality: Dead or alive?

**P**ICTURE THE SCENE: A VERY LOUD AMERICAN PR person walks into the PC Zone office with a very big box. He's grinning. He's on to something, and he knows it. He introduces himself. We go through the motions, exchanging pleasantries, discussing how tired he must be having travelled all this way (and you thought this was a glamorous job, eh?) and he eventually takes the reason for his visit out of its big box and links it up to one of our PCs. It's a bloody huge Virtual Reality helmet.

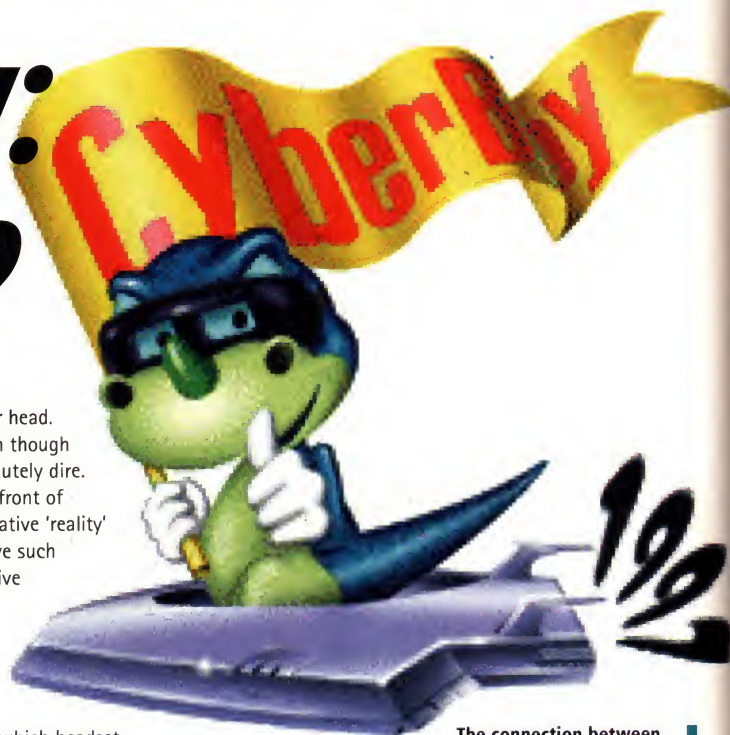
We're all impressed. We've never seen one of these things before and we can't wait to get it hooked up so that we can have a go and see what it's like. However, the annoying American person makes us all suffer by explaining the intricacies of the helmet in minute detail before loading up any games. Finally, we take it in turns to put it on and play games such as *Magic Carpet* and *Dark Forces*, and we're all amazed because you can look up and down and all around

you just by moving your head. There's just one problem though – the graphics are absolutely dire. If what we're seeing in front of us represents the alternative 'reality' we've been led to believe such products deliver, then give us all a ticket back to fantasy land, pronto.

### The end is nigh

It doesn't really matter which headset I've just been referring to: they all suck, with absolutely no exceptions. The screen resolution is disgustingly low, and at the time of release there were no plans (either short or long-term) to support SVGA which was appearing more and more frequently in games. It comes as no surprise then that, at the time of writing, the VFX1 headset (considered by many to be the best of a bad lot) has disappeared without trace. The same can be said for the Cybermaxx (considered by many to be the worst of a bad lot), and the Virtual IO glasses and, well, all of them basically.

So what went wrong? Okay, the screen resolution was crap, but you'd think they'd be able to sort that out with microprocessors getting faster all the time. The real reason VR headsets deservedly died a horrible death was that nobody in their right mind was going to pay £800 for something that looked worse than what you'd normally see on your monitor. Both the VFX1 and the Virtual IO glasses (ie the market leaders) came in at this sort of price, and the others (the Cybermaxx for example) were so awful that you wouldn't touch them at any price. The headset manufacturers promised drops in the retail prices



The connection between this little chap and the 3D glasses is a mystery to us all.



What a happy chappy, he's just bought a VFX1 VR helmet. But will he still be smiling when he discovers that his £800 investment was a complete waste of cash? I don't think so. Doh!







The Cybermaxx headset was expensive, cumbersome, ugly, and technically flawed. This may explain why it failed to make an impression on the ill-fated Virtual Reality market.



and upgrades with better screen resolutions and price-drops, but because they'd priced themselves out of the market to begin with, they failed to sell their products in significant numbers and so couldn't afford to fund future development.

### Too little, too late?

Ironically, the technology that could have saved VR from extinction is just around the corner. As Glen Corpes from Bullfrog correctly points out, "DirectX could well have made it much easier to write drivers for VR headsets. Using Direct Input, you could assign the six-axis movement used for devices like Microsoft's SideWinder joystick to VR headsets. Having a standard like Direct Input which works with all headsets would make life a lot easier."

It's a bit of a shame then that they've all disappeared, really. Well actually, that's not quite true – a new wave of LCD shutter glasses are beginning to arrive on the scene, most notably the Cyberboy, which scored a whopping 89 when we reviewed it recently. The Cyberboy glasses use Stereoscopic 3D to fool you into thinking that things are flying off your screen at you. While you can't honestly claim that this technology will provide the 'out of body' experience the VR headsets were supposed to create, it's definitely a worthy alternative, and guess what? They don't cost £800 – you can buy them for the comparatively low price of £109.

Unfortunately, this is the closest you're going to get to Virtual Reality in the near future. Still, count yourself lucky you didn't shell out £800 for a VR headset that's no longer supported. Doh! ☹



### Whoops!

In the April issue of *PC Zone* we erroneously stated that the Cyberboy 3D glasses were £129, when in fact they retail at £109. We also failed to supply the correct contact for the glasses, which is Typhoon on 01732 36221. We apologise for any confusion, embarrassment or anything else we may have caused.

# AlfaTwin

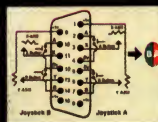
The ONLY automatic joystick selector you'll ever need

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GOLD  
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"One of the most annoying problems of PC gaming has finally been solved!"  
PC Player 7/96



### Patent Pending



Although most PCs have only one game port the design actually supports two joysticks (A & B). Advanced sticks that sport four buttons, throttle and rudder controls or coolie caps, make use of the second joystick (B) controls. When two sticks are connected only two fire buttons per stick are available.



In two player mode, both joysticks can be activated at the same time for two-player games. However, due to the design of the IBM joystick port, the advanced functions of the joysticks are not supported.



Select single player mode and the AlfaTwin allows you to switch between two joysticks. In it is made, all the functions of the stick are supported. To select your stick, simply press the fire button of the controller you wish to use.



You can cascade up to three AlfaTwins together. This allows four different joysticks to be connected simultaneously. Moreover, the six foot long cable brings the AlfaTwin round to the front of your desk, freeing you from the hassle of plugging/unplugging your joystick from the back of the computer.



AlfaCommander Pro



AlfaPilot Plus

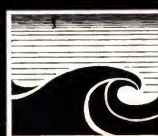
### Leading joystick manufacturer says:

"Just to let you know that the AlfaTwin Joystick-switch arrived intact. At this moment I have connected 7 (1) joysticks to the AlfaTwin -:) and it works perfectly."

Computer --- AlfaTwin --- Gravis Phoenix  
Gravis Grip Gravis GamePads

"This all works without having to pull out all the cables, winchro wunderbar! I cannot say anything else except congratulations with a very nice product."

Edu Oskam, Technical Support Specialist (Gravis Europe/Holland)



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# ZONE On-Line

## Long live the UberFragQuentos

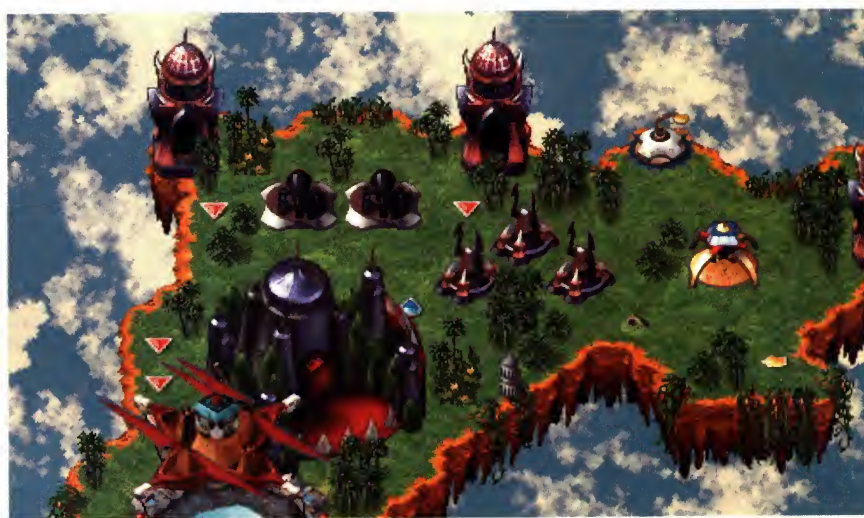
This month: psychedilia in cyberspace with *NetStorm*, How To Play *Red Alert* Over The Internet And Offend Half The American Continent At The Same Time, plus news, gossip, and more mentions of the 'Q' word (that's 'Quentin', not 'Quake').

**W**ELL, I'VE FINALLY done it. Aficionados of this fine rag's on-line history will recall that for a long period in 1995, the writer of this on-line section called himself the UberFragMeister (er, that was me but I'm kinda embarrassed about it now, so if you could keep it down...). He was an early pioneer of on-line gaming and a damn good *Doom* player, and had a healthy obsession with playing John Romero, the designer of *Doom* and also a damn good player. The search was on for some manner of trans-atlantic medium for gamesplaying. For months, the UberFrag endured tedious altercations with Americans on Dwango, Mancunians on I-Frag, and Large Men from British Telecom. To no avail. The Internet hadn't come of age then. The most anticipated clash of the gaming titans did not happen.

Then, on 13 April 1997, John Romero came to the UK to promote his new company, Ion Storm. And where did he go first? That's right. To a bunch of expensive hotels and restaurants. But *after* that, he met up with the UberFrag and they played a long-awaited game of *Quake* – a titanic battle lasting well over half an hour. A full interview and two demos of the games will be on next month's cover disc. You have to wait a month. He had to wait two years.

David McCandless

So, is this our own dear Macca chewing on Romero's 'Boom-Stick', or the legendary *Quake* designer falling foul of a man playing at the top of his form? Find out next issue.



## NETSTORM

The other month, a crowd of *PC Zone* people went down to Maidenhead, Berkshire, to chill out at an Activision launch day where they showed a load of new games and that. One of the cooler titles we spotted was a new on-line game called *NetStorm*, which is due to be launched this summer. It's been coded by some ex-Origin programmers and has been described as somewhere between "*Command & Conquer*, *Tetris*, and *LSD*." That all sounds cool, you'll freely admit. We chewed the fat with Jim Greer, head honcho at Titanic Entertainment.



PCZ: Yeah, so what's the deal here, fruitcake?

JG: Well, *NetStorm* is set in the fantasy world of Nimbus, a world where the only land is on islands floating in the sky. Below there's a constant storm raging. The players own a land mass that they populate with various offensive and defensive units: guns, power stations, radars, balloons, guard towers, etc. Each piece is aligned with one of the four furies that power the world:

wind, rain, thunder and sun. Each elemental force gives a piece certain characteristics. The wind units are faster and more flexible, and the thunder pieces are slow but shoot really hard. And so on.

PCZ: Okay, but what's the game exactly?

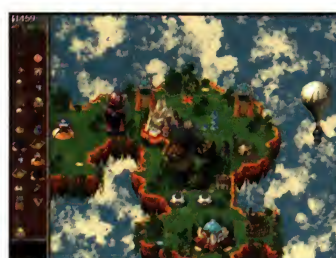
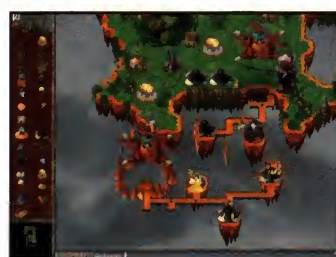
JG: Players build their islands off-line, spending time researching and using 'storm power' to construct new pieces. Then they log on to a master server and take their island into battle with other players.





(Above left) Spying on the enemy will increase any chance you have of finding weaknesses in their defences.

(Above right) Once combatants descend into the clouds to fight it out like girls, it quickly becomes a race against time as bridge tiles are thrown down to close the gap between islands. It does feel a little like the classic *Pipedream* in places.



PCZ: So your chief weapon is a floating land mass. In an on-line world of rocket launchers and proximity mines, an island is hardly a fashionable accessory.

JG: The islands persist from game to game. In *WarCraft* or *Red Alert*, you have a battle and then it's over. In *NetStorm* you pop in, have a few battles, gain more StormPower by destroying other players' pieces (the gods below get off on all the violence and donate power crystals for gratuitous destruction), and then you can come back and work on your island a bit more. So, by having this developing fortress from game to game, it's just like having a character in an RPG – if it gets hurt, you get hurt. You can develop personal grudges and vendettas against certain players.

PCZ: So how do you fight other people?

JG: You can have up to eight players in a battle. The ultimate objective is to destroy your opponents' islands. You do this by laying down bridges between your islands and the others with *Tetris*-like bridge pieces. Like that old game *Pipedream*, you create a conduit for your pieces. You need to place units in the right place, and build bridges in the right place to maximise your spread and your offensive and defensive ability. Of course, your opponents are doing the same. So you need to blow up their bridges and place units to cover all vulnerable invasion points on your island.

PCZ: A bit like the ultimate multi-player game, *Chess*?

JG: Yeah, like *Chess*. You build ranks of fire. Rows and columns. And you have to think about tactical positions and forward planning as well as sheer fire power. In *Red Alert* you send your units in and it's like a bunch of six-year-olds playing soccer and they all just gather around the ball and try to kick each other's shins. But in *NetStorm*, each piece is part of your battle plan and acts individually.

PCZ: So what else can you do?

JG: You can trade pieces with other players or you can spy on other islands.

PCZ: Cool.

JG: Yeah, there's a broker for spy information called the SpyMaster. You get credit with him by sending your own spies to infiltrate other islands. Then you can buy information about other players.

PCZ: How do you stop being spied on?

JG: You build police towers that detect spies in a certain radius. Or you can construct a jamming tower to corrupt spies' broadcasts. Spy info comes as text format and jamming creates big holes in the text.

PCZ: So what's to stop a hardcore *NetStorm* player with a veritable continent of an island just going round and stomping on all the newbie players?

JG: We can have up to 5000 games simultaneously on the server and games areas are graded by ability. You can enter a battle with seven other hardcore *NetStorm* Ninjas or, more likely, you'll want to fight with people of the same ability as you. When you're ready, you can graduate to the big boys' league. There's a massive tutorial and 15 practice missions for you to play off-line to develop your skills.

PCZ: Are there going to be any on-line sysops to keep players in-line?

JG: No, but many people in *Red Alert*, for example, if they're losing, will just quit the game. Then the winner doesn't get the satisfaction of victory. In *NetStorm*, it takes a certain amount of time – three minutes or so – to do a genuine withdrawal. If you just quit or hang up you'll lose your island.

PCZ: What if you get hung up accidentally?

JG: We've thought of that. The game will still exist on the server for a short period of time. Enough time for you to reconnect and continue.


PCZ: This all sounds very cool but how much is it going to cost?

JG: It's free. You buy the game in the shops and then the server is free.

PCZ: That's what we like. Sum it up then.

JG: What?

PCZ: Sum up the game.

JG: Well, a lot of people are doing Internet on-line strategy games. *NetStorm* is truly Internet-friendly and it's written from the ground up to handle the advantages and disadvantages of the Net. Our programmers and designers have worked on *Bioforge*, *Crusader: No Remorse* as well as *Ultima VII* and *VIII* and the original *Wing Commander*. Unlike *Red Alert*, you can control the terrain and the individual pieces. We've tried to have both the action of a real-time game and the strategic elements of a turn-based game. Nobody else is doing a game like this. 



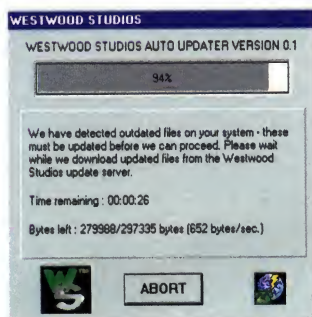
Titanic have spent a lot of time perfecting *NetStorm*'s unique visual style, as can be seen from this early conceptual sketch of the game.

Trouble in the cloud cover. *NetStorm* becomes exceedingly hectic when resources run low; delivery balloons re-stock ordinance if this is the case.



# Red Alert on-line

What could be nicer than sitting in your back garden on a sunny day with a can of cheap cola and a big bag of chipsticks? Absolutely nothing, which is why **Jamie Cunningham** got stropky when we asked him to write about *Red Alert*.



The Westwood server knows when you have an old version of Westwood chat, and can upgrade you while you're on-line. Ooh, it's so clever.



Yes yes yes, I know you've played *Red Alert*. We've all played *Red A-blummin-lert*, thank you very much. The point of this brief 're-examination' is to speak about said game's Internet capabilities: the Windows 95 front-end

that allows you to connect to a server, choose your enemy, and then point the business end of a tank at him. Way cool, huh?

Well, yes and no. Like any game that relies on the Internet, it's a bit hit and miss. Lag city. Jerksville, Arizona. Stop And Go, Utah. Huge Phone Bill, Arkansas. Er, you get the picture. In case you're still in any doubt, start a single-player *Red Alert* game and then pause the game every three seconds. That's the Internet, that is, and if you feel you can't live with it, quit reading the on-line section. Okay?

## Gonna get myself connected

If you installed *Red Alert* from Windows 95, chances are you'll have installed Westwood Chat as well. Which means you'll have discovered that it looks like an old Visual Basic tutorial. Hum.

Running it for the first time requires that you choose a nickname. This is actually the hardest part of the process, as most nicknames have been taken. No, every sodding word in



(Above) They do have this fascination with green, don't they?

(Above right) The game screen. All the options for hosting a *Red Alert* game, together with some annoying tosser talking the whole time and asking if you know where Des Moines is.

the English language has been taken. It's a bit sad really, as when you finally get onto the server with a nonsensical composite of your middle name and favourite Floyd album, you find yourself talking to people called Steve443 and Globly1gh. Weedy newbies like you who succumbed to desperation and will spend the rest of their time on-line having the piss taken out of them.

## So what happens next?


Find the meeting area of the server, where everyone talks crap and trades insults before playing the game. It's a bit IRC, which means that if you have a room temperature IQ and think swapping tank jokes with a 15 year old from Michigan is dead smart, it's going to be the best fun you've had in ages.

The selection screen is straightforward: join a game, or host your own. You have access to all the usual *Red Alert* variables: map name, tech level, starting credits, and so on. And it's on this screen where you start to realise that the Westwood Chat application not only looks a bit pants, but is a bit pants. For starters, I've yet to participate in a game that allows more than two players in it. Two players? Like, er, me and one other person? Hardly the multi-player frenzy I had in mind, but hey ho...

Second, and more importantly, there's no way of telling what kind of connection you have to your enemy before you kick off. Often you get yourself stuck in a glacially slow game with a guy from Tasmania on his spacker PC and 9600 modem, and are forced to listen to him while he apologises for his crap equipment and begs you to stay in the game.

## The bottom line

Once you've found yourself an opponent with a worthwhile connection, and have timed your on-line activity to coincide with Uncle Sam being tucked up in bed, the games progress relatively smoothly and predictably. You know the score: build things, squash things, electrocute things. Grumble when your ore trucks go off for a jaunt in front of your enemy's Seventh Armoured Brigade. Curse mightily when one of your tanks gets stuck in reverse and trundles off backwards in the heat of battle. All the joys of *Red Alert*.

The last game I played on the Westwood server involved me getting totally wiped out by some herbert from Detroit, with him telling me that "I shouldn't have messed with an American". Oh yeah? Well who invented quantum theory, buster? (A German - Ed) 



Annihilate over-zealous Americans in the on-line version of *Red Alert*. It's the only way to play!

## THE XENOPHOBIC'S GUESSING GAME

This is a little diversion you might like to try on unsuspecting guinea pigs up on the Westwood server. All you have to do is host a *Red Alert* game, and then announce that you're going to do an impression of a certain nationality. All the other guy has to do is guess whom you're impersonating. Here's a few ideas to help you along:

### 1. FRENCH

Build a line of turrets that stretch menacingly in front of your base. Offer no resistance when the enemy drives around this line and kills you dead. Smell of garlic etc.

### 2. AMERICAN

Join the battle an hour after everyone else. (Hint: if you hold down the CTRL key, you can also target your own units and simulate friendly fire.)

### 3. ITALIAN

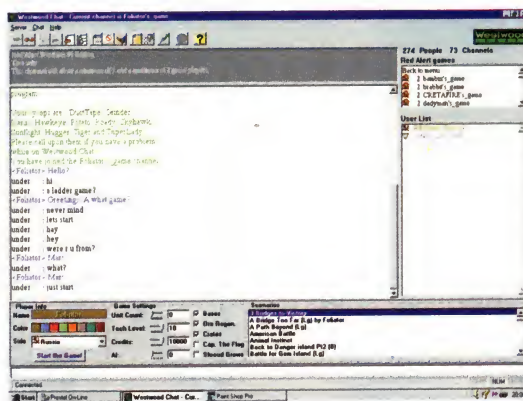
As soon as you catch sight of an enemy unit, ally with it.

### 4. JAPANESE

Go over to the other guy's base, buy souvenirs and take lots of 35mm slides.

### 5. GREEK

Eat taramasalata and smash plates, er, oh, I don't know.





# On-Line News & Gossip

The page with its finger on the pulse of on-line gaming

## LucasArts on-line

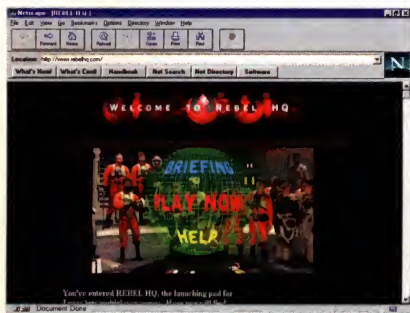
LucasArts and Microsoft have struck a deal which will bring LucasArts' up-coming multi-player games to Microsoft's hugely successful *Internet Gaming Zone*. This multi-player service will be free (yep, you read it right – FREE!), and will cover all LucasArts' multi-player games including *Outlaws*,

*X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*, *Jedi Knight* and *Star Wars: Supremacy*.

Microsoft's *Internet Gaming Zone* already boasts a subscription of over 200,000 users, but the introduction of these hotly

anticipated new titles is sure to drive that amount through the roof. Now more PC gamers than ever will be able to choose the Light or Dark side of the force and fight it out in a huge virtual universe far far away.

To take part in this pan-global battle, players will have to buy a copy of the game and log on at the Rebel HQ Website, which can be found at <http://www.rebelhq.com>.

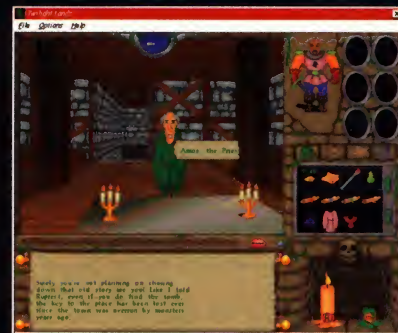


## Twilight lands

E-On, the successful Leicester-based on-line entertainment channel, have announced the addition of *Twilight Lands* to their extensive portfolio of multi-player games.

An on-line role-playing game, in the style of 3DO's *Meridian 59*, the first-person hack and slash adventuring action of *Twilight Lands* will no doubt appeal to goblin fans the world over – for it will be somewhere else for them to meet, fight, swap wands, chat and stuff. Mystery and danger await one of three chosen classes: warrior, sorcerer or cleric, from which the player chooses before hurtling headlong into an immersive world of wizards and necromancers. Sounds like a hoot.

We'll be reviewing the game in full next issue, but if you can't wait that long have a look at <http://www.entertainment-online.com> to satiate any goblin-rooting tendencies you may have.



## Blasted by Disney

One of the world's giants in entertainment is entering the burgeoning on-line market, as Disney announced plans to launch a new kids-oriented on-line gaming network, starting in the US with European services following afterwards. Called *Disney Blast*, the network is a Web-based, subscription service designed for kids and parents. A free two-week preview began on 9 April.

*Disney Blast* will offer daily content aimed at the younger PC gaming set, including jokes, comics, on-line activity and books. Users will need a Pentium with 16Mb of RAM and Windows 95 to participate. The Microsoft Network will also be carrying *Disney Blast* free of charge for its subscribers.

## Meridian 59 update

3DO's award-winning *Meridian 59* debuts its largest update yet with the release of *Vale Of Sorrow* – an add-on pack which introduces vast new areas, new monsters and more non-player characters to the existing swords and sorcery environment. The look of the game has also been re-vamped with new world graphics and a new front-end. There's even a new spring line-up, for *Meridian 59*'s more fashion-conscious player, with colourful new avatar and clothing options. So now you can dress each other up...

The *Vale Of Sorrow* update is now available free of charge to all current *Meridian 59* users via FTP download. A collector's edition of the *Vale Of Sorrow* disc can be pre-ordered over the Internet at <http://meridian.3do.com/meridian/update>.



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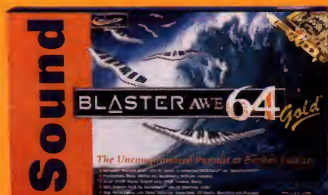
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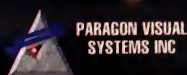


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# CAPTIVU

Ever wondered why some graphics scream realism from the rooftops, while others look like they were put together by Stevie Wonder in the pub? **Tim Green** takes a gander at motion capture technology and finds it's making games look so real that he's thinking of asking Pocahontas out...

## H

AVE YOU EXAMINED YOUR motions lately? This may sound like a medical enquiry but could just as well be asked of any major software publisher active in the games market today. Quite simply, the market's gone motion capture crazy. Every other box has 'motion capture' stickered on it as if these two words have the power to entrance gamers and send them zombie-like to the counter with three crisp tenners in their hands.

capture just a fad or does it have the potential to set games off into a new era of realism and playability? Are we talking fur coat and no knickers here?

### Mink coat and large pants

The first UK company to use the technology was Gremlin. Two years ago the Sheffield company was emerging from a tough period in which the cost and complexity of publishing console games was crippling many medium-sized

**By recording the 'real' movements of human subjects, motion capture technology promises hitherto undreamed of realism from computer-generated sprites.**

By recording the 'real' movements of human subjects, motion capture technology promises hitherto undreamed of realism from computer-generated sprites. In the last two years titles such as *FIFA 97*, *Actua Soccer*, *Micro Machines 2* and *Cyberblade* have been developed using the technique. And who could deny they look wonderful? There's no doubt that motion capture has taken desktop realism to new heights.

All sounds marvellous, doesn't it? But then, so did the last 'next big thing' - full motion video - and look what happened to that. So the big question has to be: is motion

companies. Gremlin pulled out and invested heavily in development tools which they hoped would make their PC games rival those of the industry's biggest players - EA, Virgin and MicroProse.



Anco motion captured internationals Ian Wright (above) Patrick Viera and David Seaman to help keep the animation in *Kick Off 97* as realistic as possible.







It's the summer of 1996 and the reassuring thwack of leather on willow is ringing in the air. But we're not in some leafy village green. No, the scene is actually a rather characterless office block near Reading. This is Electronic Arts' own motion capture studio and two club cricketers (from Clifton, among the best teams in 'non-league' cricket) are bowling, batting, fielding, keeping wicket and appealing in front of men in suits. The fact that they both have little silver discs stuck all over their whites just compounds the surrealism of the event.

But if this is what's required to make *Ian Botham 2* (the sequel to Beam Software's SNES hit) the most realistic cricket game ever, then so be it. *Ian Botham 2* is getting the full EA Sports label treatment. In fact, every game made by the label in 1996 was motion captured.



## How it works

If you have a few hundred thousand lying about you could have your choice of two types of motion capture technology. The first, called a tethered system, fits its human subject with up to 25 cables and uses a magnetic field to transmit data to a computer. The second system uses lights and discs.

**B**OTH SYSTEMS HAVE THEIR PROS AND cons. The great advantage of tethered systems is that they allow reconstruction in real-time because information travels directly into the computer. On the downside they are cumbersome for the wearer. This makes them unsuitable for, say, sport and this is why the optical set-up has become the standard for the games industry.

During an optical shoot the human subject is fitted with light-reflecting markers which are usually attached to the joints – ankles, knees, elbows, hips etc – as well as the head, hands and feet. The subject then performs manoeuvres in front of infra-red spotlights which reflect the markers clearly. Cameras record these movements at up to 120MHz and feed the data into a Sun Workstation for editing.

On screen the film appears to show a stickman made from points of light (think of *The Saint* logo and you're halfway there) which can be used as the basis for modelling ultra-realistic human movements.

Despite its current status as the hottest technology in the games business, motion capture technology has actually been around

since the '70s. The first systems were designed to observe the "vitality of aquatic micro-organisms" – whatever that means. Even sperm count was somehow researched using the technology. Subsequently NASA got hold of motion capture and used it to test space suits, and General Motors went on to apply it to crash tests.

By the early '90s the arrival of powerful Silicon Workstations meant that programmers finally had the processing power to turn film into animation. Nike used the technology to enhance shoe design (specifically the comfort factor).

Inevitably, Hollywood muscled in, and motion capture became another tool in the SFX guys' bag of tricks. Silicon Valley soon followed, with Mindscape, Acclaim and others incorporating the technology into sports and combat games.

As we've mentioned elsewhere, it was Sheffield-based Gremlin who brought motion capture to the UK. During a radical company rethink two years ago they decided to throw money at development resources (rather than expensive console licences) and bought their own studio for \$250,000.



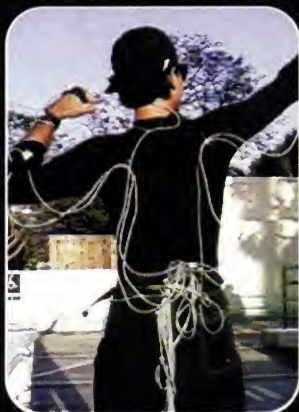
David Ginola (above) bared his chest to help EA with the animation for the massive selling *FIFA 97*. This pic, however, is from the winger's new vid, 'David does Dallas'.



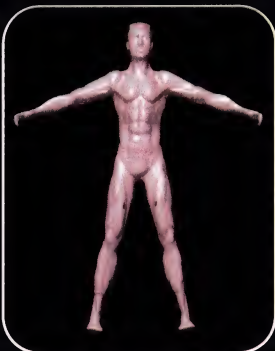
During this time motion capture was starting to make waves in the US. Gremlin's software manager Tim Heaton takes up the story: "It was being talked about a lot in the US. Film companies were using it and it was hovering in the distance as a games technology. We were planning a major sports game and we knew that motion capture could help us make something special."

Achieving that 'special' sports game didn't come cheap – Gremlin paid a cool \$250,000 to buy their own studio. The game in question went on to become *Actua Soccer* (later to form the basis of *Euro 96*), and very successful it was too. Its players' ultra-realistic movements were realised after Chris

**Once you've got the movement of, say, a snake on the 'files' there's nothing to stop talented artists grafting on a human head for all manner of gruesome effects.**



Although there are different ways to motion capture people, they all rely on the same method of sticking light-reflecting devices to various joints and capturing their movement using special cameras. Once the subject has been rigged up they'll have to go through the motions many times in order to get enough data for the techy guys to work with. The fact that the light-reflecting balls tend to fly off with any sudden movement makes the whole thing a very lengthy process.



Woods and Andy Sinton spent a day throwing themselves about in the Gremlin studio.

But Heaton reveals that the production process was far from smooth. Although it appears that filming the sequences for capture (pictured on next page) was straightforward, the clean-up operation was a nightmare. He explains: "The problem is that you get some of the light-sources disappearing off the frame or you have a complex manoeuvre which is hard to decipher. So you need really skilled technicians and clever software to clean it all up before you can begin modelling. We ended up writing new programs."

It's the age-old story: a new technology promises to make things easy and ends up creating a veritable slew of new complications. Some companies find these problems too much – Argonaut experimented with a tethered motion capture system (using cable rather than light markers) for *FX Fighter* but eventually gave up on the idea.

These complications may explain why many software houses employ a specialist company rather than set up their





Ex-England keeper Chris Woods was motion-captured by Gremlin for *Actua Soccer*. Some people still maintain this is why the keepers in the game are pretty dismal.

own facility. London-based Virtuosity have worked with Activision, Psygnosis and others. Founder Quentin Plant told us why: "For every day spent in the studio you spend three days on clean up. It's boring work which requires skilled artists who tend to move jobs a lot."

This is to stress the negative, of course. For all its faults motion capture, when the software is mastered, can reproduce astonishingly realistic action on screen – but in a fraction of the time it would take an artist to draw it. You've only to watch a captured game for a few seconds for the realism to hit you between the eyes.

At Gremlin virtually every game produced now has a motion capture element – from the 120 captures which form the basis of the action in *Actua Soccer* and *Golf* to the modelled monsters in *Realms Of The Haunted* to the intro sequences of *Reloaded*. And the same can be said for EA Sports – each one of their games has been motion captured since the company acquired their own studio in 1995.

## Stars in your eyes

Not surprisingly, motion capture has become far more than just a technical process – it's become a marketing ploy. It's no longer a case of dressing up just anyone in the motion capture gear – instead of Bromsgrove Rovers' left-back we get David Ginola. He may cost more, but feel the width of that press coverage.

But the rampant exploitation of motion capture as a gimmick hasn't seduced everyone. "Realism doesn't equal gameplay" chirp the cynics. After all, some gamers prefer *Kick Off* to *FIFA* and keep their Amiga 500s on life support just to play *Sensi Soccer*.

Heaton recognises this: "Playability is everything, I wouldn't ever argue with that. Motion capture's just a tool for working towards it. But the fact is that people have got faster, more powerful PCs and they want realism."

Yes, but look at *Pocahontas* – pure animation yet worryingly horny. The same goes for *Tomb Raider* – the beautifully smooth movement (and extraordinary pair of charlies on its female hero) is a result of using just talented artists and Dolly Parton pictures. Jeremy Smith, head of Core, is a stout believer in the human hand: "The problem with

motion capture is that you waste so much time cleaning it up. Hand-drawn animation gives you freedom. And you can cheat. A good artist can create a walk in six cycles and use tricks to make it look as good as a motion capture in 12."

With this comment Smith hints at another factor crucial to the whole debate. It's argued that motion capture requires more polygons than drawing and therefore produces slower games. Jeremy Smith has another reason for preferring hand-drawn talent – setting up a motion capture shoot is a pain in the arse. As part of the publishing group EIDOS, Core have access to the technology (at production house Glassworks), but booking the facility and getting everything done in the time allotted is apparently more trouble than it's worth.

## Graphically gripping

Nevertheless, those companies which do invest in their own studios could find the technology taking them in all sorts of weird directions as the future unfolds. At EA there's talk of wiring up tarantulas and even rhinos (well, pigs actually since they move like rhinos) in order to recreate jungle scenes more vividly. And once you've got the movement of, say, a snake on the 'files' there's nothing to stop talented artists grafting on a human head for all manner of gruesome effects.

The capture of facial movement looks set to become more common too. Using a headset to generate real-time animations (remember the floating head of Chips on *Going Live*?) may become important to Internet applications of motion capture. Quentin Plant explains: "Video conferencing is difficult due to the bandwidth needed to cope with FMV. The data rate for facial motion capture is tiny in comparison so it could become the best way to communicate visually on-line."

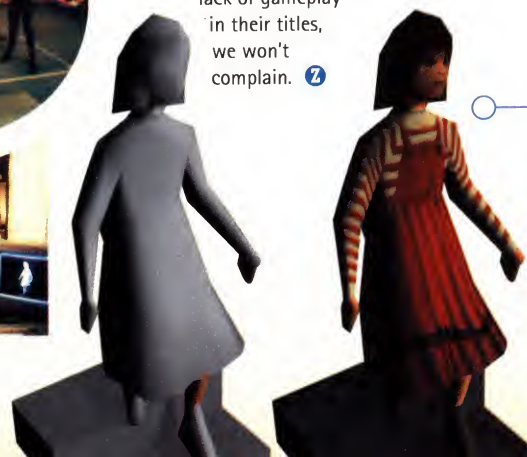
It's a short leap from here to virtual reality. Talking, shaking hands, having sex – it's all feasible once data suits with internal pressure pads to simulate touch have been developed. Imagine what it would do for pornography: wire up a Marilyn Monroe body double, get her to do disgusting things, morph on the head of Norma Jean and you're away.

In a few years you may not even need wires. Acclaim have already spent \$10 million in the US on a next generation system which uses neural networks for shape recognition;

in other words, the computers simply 'watch' the action and then reproduce it as data.

Curtain-twitching PCs – whatever next?

Either way, it looks as though motion capture's here to stay. As long as publishers don't use it to hide lack of gameplay in their titles, we won't complain. **Z**



(Left) Psygnosis went to great lengths to make the animation in *The City Of Lost Children* as realistic as possible. They even went as far as sticking light-reflecting balls on the individual pleats of the lead character's dress.



Once the movement data has been captured, the lengthy task of joining the dots begins. This isn't always as easy as it looks, and takes ages.





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# Everything you wanted to know about *Championship Manager 2*, but were too afraid to ask...

In the first of a new series we tell you how to succeed in various fields of PC-based human endeavour. **Patrick McCarthy** reveals the secrets of success in the world's finest football management sim.



YOU COULD WITTER ON AND ON ABOUT the subtleties of *Championship Manager 2* for an entire issue, but as we've only got a couple of pages we'll get straight into it.

## Formation

There's no 'correct' formation in *CM2*, and no guaranteed tactic that will ensure you sweep all before you, which is one of the good things about the game – you select your tactics and playing style to suit your players. Some people recommend certain tactics and formations against certain computer formations which is fine, except the success percentages they quote are no better than we usually achieve playing 5-3-2 variations – but that's because we get players who'll fit the system. For this piece, we started a game using the "Zola&co" update and the national manager cheat: four and a half seasons in, we've won the World Cup and European Championship with England, and two Premierships, the UEFA Cup, the European Cup, World Club Cup and European Super Cup with Spurs.

## Tactics

When it comes to playing styles, you have to throw your footballing principles out the window. Forget "Passing" style, it doesn't work properly. The Collyer brothers themselves have admitted it's a waste of time, and have promised to fix it in the next version. For now, play "Direct Ball" and be done with it.

Tactics should take account of your players' abilities. There's no point having a wing-back going on lengthy runs up the wing for 90 minutes if they have a pace rating of 5 and stamina of 8. They need good (14+) pace and stamina – and intelligence, otherwise they'll be caught out of position upfield when they should be defending. If you want them to do something constructive when they get there, of course, good passing, creativity and shooting would also be nice – and usually very expensive. But settle for passing. Think logically about the qualities needed in each position, and if you can't afford all of them, go for the bare essentials: heading and tackling for central defenders, passing and creativity for midfielders, heading and shooting for attackers, and so on. Anything extra is a bonus at lower levels.

## Buying players

Buying players is one of the most rewarding parts of the game. Most people spend days and days trawling through the transfer markets and player lists and nothing is more pleasurable than discovering an unknown and seeing them turn into a star in your team. Be patient and check each player according to what your requirements are. Use the "Skills" search facility to whittle players down. Search the free transfers and schoolboy players if you're in a lower division – older players on free transfers from higher division clubs can still do the business for you for a season or so – but try to get them on short-term contracts, so you can dump them for nothing when they're clapped out. Promising youngsters should be signed on long-term, if possible (there's a way round the "Big Club Release Clause" if you want to cheat). And getting a good goalkeeper is essential. Never mind his ratings – check his stats and the number of goals his team has conceded and take it from there. It's sometimes worth checking out the reserve goalkeepers signed by big clubs.

Remember to allow all new signings time to "blend" with the team, and be patient. Remember that choice of captain is



Where were you in the glorious summer of 1998, when England won the World Cup?



Your first European Cup win is always a proud moment.



So Beckham got two goals in the 1998 World Cup Final and two in the 2000 European Championships Final. That doesn't mean you have to abandon your principles and buy a Man Utd player.



The formation that's swept all before it. Alright, so the players help.



The plucky Dutch underdogs didn't stand a chance. Off-season friendlies are good for blending your team.

## Red-hot buys

Many of the Websites have lists of players that go into three figures, but not all of them are guaranteed to perform every time because of the randomising HEX value built into many ratings. And some of them, like Ronaldo and Patrick Kluivert, are obvious if you have the money and can persuade them to join. But here are a few who should do the business for you fairly regularly:

### IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLY OFF

**Santiago Canizares** (GK – Real Madrid)  
**Richard Wright** (GK – Ipswich)  
**Sol Campbell** (Spurs)  
**Michael Duberry** (Chelsea – if you're quick and he'll come)  
**Carsten Nerlinger** (Karlsruher – goalscoring sweeper)  
**Hans-Peter Goldbaek** (German sweeper/midfielder)  
**Marcelo Otero** (Vicenza – Uruguayan goalscoring midfielder)

**Robert Prosinecki** (Barcelona – usually keen to leave)  
**Neil Lennon** (Everyone's favourite superstar)  
**Vladimir Sharan** (Ukraine – fine midfielder)  
**Goran Vucevic** (Croatia – if he shows up)  
**Ivica Mornar** (Croatia – again, if he shows up)  
**Goran Vlaovic** (Croatian goalscoring phenomenon)  
**Rodrigo Barrera** (Univ. Catolica, Chile – goalscoring forward)  
**Julen Guerrero** (Athletic Bilbao – another goalscoring forward)  
**Viktor Leonenko** (Dinamo Kiev's goal and assist machine)

### IF YOU'RE SKINT

**Jimmi Nielsen** (Top GK, Denmark, usually appears as a Free Transfer after a couple of years)  
**Peter Smith** (Brighton – as a sweeper or wing-back)  
**Danny Murphy** (Crewe – the poor man's Neil Lennon)  
**David Connolly** (Millwall)  
**Robert Taylor** (Brentford – a goal machine)



## General tips

- Avoid wasting time when buying foreigners by only targetting "Interested Foreign Based".
- Use team names or nationalities in "Searching All Players" option.
- If one of your players becomes "wanted", check the club(s) concerned to see if they've got anyone worth exchanging for. If so, put a bid in and click "Exchange". Use "Excluding Unavailable", and if they're foreign, "Interested Foreign Based" to save yourself some time.
- Always bear in mind that players from smaller South American clubs and Eastern Europe tend to have higher skill ratings and are usually cheaper. Don't worry about having too many different nationalities: my Spurs squad has four Brazilians and Germans, three Englishmen and Italians, two Croatians, Dutchmen, French, Ukrainians and Spanish, and one Portugese, Georgian, Romanian, Chilean and Argentinian. And Neil Lennon. And they all get on very well.
- Take advantage of any weaknesses in the opponent's side, or any match events. If they have a defender sent off, put someone where he used to be, and have another running there; if they have a slow defender, put your quickest attacker against him; and so on.
- Don't play people who aren't fit if you can avoid it. Unfit is less than 90 per cent; less than 85 per cent means they're more likely to play poorly and be injured.

## Cheat! Cheat! Cheat!

If you're the kind of person who'd cheat at CM2, there's no hope for you. Personally, we frown on cheating in any form in CM2. But The People Must Be Told, so here goes...

### 1. BUY BIG STARS FOR NOTHING

When you bid for a player you want to transfer to your club, and who's keen to come, bid a ludicrous amount. It doesn't matter if you haven't even got that much money – just bid so much that it's accepted immediately. Once it's accepted, Adjust Offer down to Free (or whatever your slimy conscience allows) and click on "Cancel" – NOT "Make Offer". The transfer will go through at that price.

### 2. PUT A STOP TO BIG CLUB RELEASE CLAUSE

Put any of your players who have a big club release clause and want to leave up for loan. When a big club approaches them, refuse the loan. They'll be trapped in your footballing backwater.

### 3. GET HOT YOUNG PLAYERS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

Before the end-of-season save, shortlist all the old, ex-stars who are likely to retire. When the new season starts, the retired ones will be replaced by young hotshots.

### 4. SWAP UNWANTED SLOBS FOR STARS

Put your transfer-listed players on huge values as soon as they become wanted. Use the exchange procedures we've given you and swap them with the clubs concerned for much better players. Hopefully,



Another picture trying to convince you we know what we're talking about.



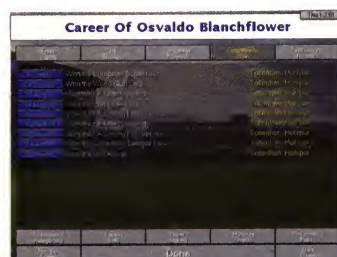
How many times do you need to be told? Buy Neil Lennon.



It could happen. It could... Yes it could...



Another shiny trinket for our already overcrowded trophy cabinet.



It's amazing what you can do with a paint package, isn't it?



George Graham didn't get the Brazil job, then...

very important, so make sure he's got at least the joint highest influence rating and isn't too young. Player morale is also very important. If a player is unhappy for some reason (he feels his asking price is too high for example) his form will deteriorate and this will affect the rest of the team, so make an effort to keep your squad relatively happy, especially the captain. Finally, don't change your formation too much once you've found something that suits your team. **Z**

## Pick the team for big games

Check out big-game players by comparing their European and International performances with the regular club stats – or noting their performance in cup games if you're using a lower league club.

## Blender

When you sign a new player, give him time to fit into the side. Every team has a random number allocated to it – its "blend" number – it's not a rating. When a player joins, their "blend" number will be that of their previous team. The further it is numerically from your team, the longer he'll take to fit in. But your team also has a blend rating, which determines how quickly a new player will fit into the playing style. Until they fit in, they can be below par, or even completely shite. This is infuriating if you've spent most of your budget on someone, but stick with it. Sometimes they fit in quickly – but it's not unknown for someone to be crap for a whole season. To help them fit in, play them in summer friendlies. During a season, bring them on as a substitute a number of times. Once their ratings rise, you can start them.

## CM2 Websites

There are a lot of dedicated people out there, selflessly devoting their lives to making CM2 more up to date, more transparent, and yes, even more easy to cheat at. There's Boah's famous game editor that lets you change player and team ratings. There's another that lets you work on saved games and others that change team, stadium and manager ratings. There's one that lets you use European clubs. There's a Windows 95 trader that lets you keep things up to date, moving players between clubs and allocating money where necessary. One bloke, Miles, uses Boah's editor to produce a regular player update. Be aware, though, that if you use any of these and cock up your game, you've no one to blame but yourself. Start a completely new game with them, instead...

Two sites where you can get most stuff are:

<http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/miles/>  
Miles' site has updates for English, Dutch and Italian games, as well as most of the editors and links to other CM2 sites.

<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Park/6431/cm.html>  
Daniel Gothe's site is the home of the original Windows 95 CM2 Trader and has links to other editors and team rosters.



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## Command & Conquer: Red Alert Mission Guide

Last month **Warren Christmas** led you through the Allied missions of *C&C: Red Alert*. This time round he's taking on the Soviet missions (disc two). Nothing if not predictable.



05

### OBJECTIVE: Capture the radar dome and destroy all Allied forces

Yeah, yeah, we're starting with the fifth mission. If you can't get this far then frankly you're probably beyond help. Okay, quite a toughie this. Taking over the radar dome with an engineer is relatively easy (remember you must destroy at least 75 per cent of a building before you can capture it), but clearing every last enemy unit on Khalkis Island can be very time-consuming.

Whatever, deploy your MCV immediately and construct all the usual basic buildings (power plant, ore refinery, barracks and war factory), plus a radar dome. Build-up plenty of heavy tanks and V2 rocket launchers, at least six Yaks and two or three engineers, as well as a second ore truck.

Ore to the south is limited, so you'll need to head north, clearing the way with tanks. Destroy the Allied ore truck as soon as possible – depriving the enemy of cash is vital and, with this mission in particular, you need all the ore you can get. Continue round to the east and, from a safe distance, destroy the turrets with some V2s.

Enter the base with a few tanks and engineers and capture the enemy radar dome in the middle. Watch out for a 'surprise' visit from an APC via the road to the north – it's filled with engineers desperate to recapture the dome! In case of emergency, just sell it!

Okay, things get tricky now. Defend the coastline with several V2s and, if you're careful not to shoot the barrels, you may be able to capture the Allied construction yard, the refinery and possibly even the sub pen. Problem is, the naval fleet surrounding the base will probably be very strong. You'll probably be better off concentrating on the island for a while. That is, revealing terrain with the spy plane and attacking enemy refinery (or refineries) with your Yaks.

If you've acted quick enough, you should be able to stop

the Allied forces getting a foothold on the island and you can just pick off enemy units with your Yaks. Left it too late? Then you'll need a naval yard plus several transporters and submarines to get your units across. Oh, and a lot of patience. The south-west corner is a good landing position but watch out for enemy landings in the same location.

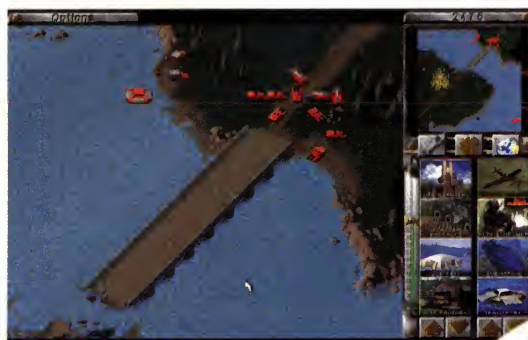
06

### OBJECTIVE: Get cargo trucks to the east island intact

Simple one this. Move your MCV west immediately, along with the trucks (which must be protected at all costs) and the APCs (which are filled with useful infantry and engineers). Fight off the initial attack

with what's left. Now set up base to the west, somewhere near the ore fields, constructing all the usual buildings (you will probably find a service depot useful in this mission) and an extra ore truck (there's plenty of ore around). Repair the construction yard if it took any damage.

It's not necessary to defend your base as such, but you'll need to watch out for minor tank and infantry attacks from



the south and, later, attacks from the sea to the north. It's fairly easy to consolidate your position, so concentrate on building up a large force of heavy tanks and V2 rocket launchers (the latter are useful for taking out enemy ships), as well as half a dozen Yaks.

If you've used your spy plane effectively you should have exposed the enemy base which is on the main road in the centre of the map. Send Yaks into the base and destroy the Allied refinery as soon as possible. Repair the Yaks regularly and take out what you can. Send at least ten tanks ▶

### Read this!

You're stuck but don't know what level you're on? Hit the Escape key during a mission and you'll see a small number in the bottom-right corner of the screen which looks something like this: SCGxxEy (for Allied missions) or SCUxxEy (for Soviet missions). xx is the mission number; y is either A, B or C, depending on which level you've chosen.

**Note:** To save space we've assumed that where given a choice (missions 7 and 11, for example), you've gone for option A – that's the top arrow on the map. If you chose another option, the objectives of the mission and solution will be much the same, but the map will be different. Alright?

06







07

in and you should have no problem mopping up.

There'll be at least four tanks defending the bridge which leads to the east island. If you can, draw them out before pummeling them, and then send across the cargo trucks, guarded by tanks, to complete the level. There's a good chance, however, that the bridge will become impassable. No problem – just build a sub pen and clear the sea with submarines. Now load all your tanks into transports and send them across, followed by the cargo trucks. Easy.



## 07

**OBJECTIVE: Deactivate the four coolant stations with engineers within 30 minutes**

Indoor mission! Hurrah! First things first, hit Escape and slow down the game. Moving quickly, guide the infantry down the east corridor, move across to the west and shoot the barrels. Move out south and follow the red line all the way west, passing by the guarded room. Shoot the barrels to free the (friendly) guard dogs.

Head west using the south passage and shoot the barrels. Send at least six dogs west and follow the enemy through the crates (watch out for the explosion). Kill him before he gets to the top, move up to free the hostages and send them all back south.

Send dogs/troops en masse to clear the guarded room you passed earlier (shoot the barrels in the room before you move in). Send engineers to the four control centres in the north (they're in pairs either side of the main room). When these are deactivated turrets mysteriously appear to wipe out Tanya and her chums guarding the large control centre. De-activate this to finish the mission.

## 08

**OBJECTIVE: Destroy all Allied units on and around the island. Oh, and the locals**

Bit of an epic mission this. Build a barracks as soon as possible as this forces the enemy to retreat. Now construct an ore refinery and a war factory (and then all the usual stuff). Scout around a little and you'll find several entry points to your base. For now you should guard all these as best you can with a splattering of heavy tanks and infantry, but you'll soon discover exactly which routes the enemy likes to attack from.

Ore is in very short supply in the area around the base so you need to take command of the region to the west. Five heavy tanks will probably suffice, but expect to make runs back to the service depot for repairs. Use three trucks to speed up the ore collecting.

You need to get a big picture of the island so send a sub

out to reveal all of the coastline. Use the spy plane to check out the enemy base (in the north-west) and the enemy's main ore field (in the north-east). Drop paratroopers behind enemy lines to cause a little chaos and to expose more Allied territory. There's a small base just to the north of your start position. Destroy it or take it over – it doesn't really matter.

Now concentrate on building up a decent force comprising heavy tanks and V2 rocket launchers (keep these in small defensive groups), plus at least six Yaks. Watch for naval attacks, particularly along the south coast. You'll need to build a few extra subs to keep things under control, although you can also use your Yaks quite effectively. Destroy enemy mine layers as soon as you can (they can cause big losses later). Civilians cohort with the Allies, so clear them out too.

To wipe out the Allies, group *all* of your forces together (you will need at least 15 tanks) and charge in from one direction, concentrating your fire on one target at a time and running over enemy troops with your tanks. There'll probably still be some enemy boats around so, with eight or so subs, circle the island and pick them off one by one. It's not a quick or elegant method but it works!

## 09

**OBJECTIVE: Destroy the cargo truck before the Allies leave the area with it**

Now this is fun. What you're *supposed* to do, presumably, is dick about for an hour or so, taking control of the map before flushing out the truck and destroying it. There is however a rather good way to cheat at this level.

Destroy all the enemy occupying your base and repair all the buildings. Send the harvester south as there are ore deposits close by (build a couple more harvesters when you have the time and money). Construct an advanced power plant and train a couple of engineers as soon as possible. Now, as fast as you can, take the engineers and two or three tanks to the west coast.

08





09

Move up a little and you'll find a small undefended base with big potential for the opposition. Capture the construction yard and barracks (you can destroy anything else) and start knocking out 'bonus' Allied troops such as rocket infantry, a medic and, in particular, a spy. This second base will come under attack eventually. When it does, just sell it and send all the units back to your main base.

While you're doing the above, keep a close eye on your original base. You can expect helicopters to attack your tesla coil, an APC to come in from the north (it's filled with engineers, so watch out), and a landing on the south-west coastline.

Build tanks to defend your territory, as well as a handful of Yaks. Scout around directly to the north and you'll find a fairly small enemy base guarded by tanks on a bridge. Don't worry about destroying it, just uncover the whole area with a spy and spy plane. You can only expose an area just to the west of this base temporarily, as it's protected by two gap generators. The cargo truck is next to the generator on the right in a small guarded pen.

The trick here is to send in a spy plane to uncover the truck and then, in the split-second before the map goes black again, target the truck with your Yaks. If you have at least four Yaks they'll have no trouble getting past anti-aircraft fire to destroy the truck before it makes a dash for safety. Sorted.

10

#### OBJECTIVE: Protect the Soviet convoy moving through Allied occupied territory

This one's pretty easy. The convoy of trucks follow the closest truck, so leave that one where it is for now, moving the other three west. Use the spy plane to uncover the terrain ahead, attack each enemy unit or installation using focused fire (ie pick a target and get everything to attack it simultaneously) and then move on.

Kill rocket infantry by running them over (watch out for some hidden behind trees). Other infantry (and the ships) can be cleared with the aircraft once you've destroyed nearby AA guns with the tanks. Shoot all the barrels as you go and watch out for the power-up hidden beneath one of the oil wells. Collect this with a group of tanks and they all return to full strength. You're given a little cash so if you lose any



aircraft, simply replace them with MIGs.

As you head west reinforcements arrive in the form of engineers. You can attempt to take over the base half-way along (it could be useful for repairs), but it's not really necessary. Keep heading west, carefully clearing everything in your way and, once you're through, send the convoy across.

10





12



to cope with beach landings, while six or so subs in each southern corner will see off naval attacks. This said, expect some heavy losses when you attack the ships guarding the north of the map.

- You need a lot of cash for this mission and while there's a lot of ore on the main island, the isle to the east contains even more. Try to take control of this as soon as you can (it's guarded by tanks), but make sure you destroy the nearby cruiser

first as it will attempt to blow up the adjoining bridge!

- The only landing position is opposite your island to the north. It's not especially well guarded but it's littered with mines. Clear these by firing randomly with helicopters (hold ctrl and click to force fire), but watch out for the pesky rocket infantry. Obviously you're going to have to land plenty of heavy tanks and V2s via transports, but don't forget your air-power. In taking out tanks and turrets, a dozen or so MIGs can make the big push into the main base a lot, lot easier (concentrate fire on AA guns first though!). Everything has to be destroyed for the mission to end, so watch out for the camouflaged pillboxes.

12

**OBJECTIVE: Capture the tech centres. 'Use extreme caution!'**

Straight into the action here as you're dumped next to an enemy base. Retreat the V2 north to a safe distance from where it should target the turrets. With the tanks, run over as many enemy infantry as possible, while attacking the enemy armour. Keep the MCV north until you have destroyed all units.

Deploy the MCV just south of where the enemy's laid, so you're closer to the ore. Money's tight, so build a power station and barracks, but before training infantry make sure you have enough left for a refinery. If you have any infantry left, don't go exploring just yet – you could provoke attack.

The build-up from this point is fairly slow, so help things along a bit with at least one extra ore truck. Build a kennel and a couple of guard dogs and then knock out as many tanks as you can. Meanwhile watch out for a troop-carrying helicopter and thief heading for your base, a mine layer in the ore field just to the east and tank/infantry attacks from the south.

When your position is consolidated (ie you're defending comfortably and building a decent force of tanks and V2s), scout around and go on the offensive. Capture the base in the south-west. Take the Allied tech centre and you'll get a GPS which exposes the whole map. Now aim to capture the base in the south-east and build a sub pen. Load everything you have into transports and attack the island from the south. Finally, remember to capture – not destroy! – the three tech centres.

11

**OBJECTIVE: Destroy the Allied naval fleet and base**

After the variation – and comparative ease – of the last couple of missions, you should find this one a more familiar scrap. And a pretty darn tough one at that. It's very difficult to give specific advice but here, in no particular order, are some useful pointers.

- It's a very confusing map, so scout around as much as you can early on. Use the transporter to expose coastlines. The Allied naval yard is in the north-east corner. Uncover it, drop some paratroopers just behind and it's history.

- Ships will attack from the east and the west (seemingly appearing from nowhere) and transports will attempt to land across the north of the island, but don't get too carried away building submarines to defend. Tanks and V2s should be able

11





13

#### OBJECTIVE: Destroy all enemy units

Uh-oh – bug alert. According to the game's mission objectives, you're supposed to destroy all the radar domes and then capture the Chronosphere in the south-west corner. However, we've yet to find anyone who has completed the mission this way. Do as it says and you'll get a "Mission failed" message. Whatever you do, don't go seeking out the Chronosphere, even with a spy plane, as the Allies panic and destroy it. If they do, it's mission over. Indeed, this is the only Allied building or unit you must leave standing in order to complete the mission (yes, you even have to find the camouflaged pillboxes). Don't go destroying bridges either – it can make navigation around the map very tricky later on.

The beginning of the mission is quite tough as you'll face beach landings to the north (protect here with tesla coils) and an onslaught from the south. The south is where the main base is, incidentally, and you should attack this first (the nearby ore trucks are easy to get). You'll find minor bases positioned along the edge of map to the west. All are covered by gap generators, making assaults extremely hazardous. A sizeable force of heavy tanks, V2s and mammoth tanks will win you through.

Build plenty of MIGs (we used ten), as they're very effective at hit and run operations, particularly on ships. The bulk of the Allied naval fleet is best taken out with subs. You'll need two sub pens, to the north and south of your base. To build on the coast you may need to form a link from your base. Use something cheap, such as kennels or silos, and sell them when the pens have been built. You have the Iron Curtain technology for the first time (which makes units temporarily invulnerable), so use it!

14

#### OBJECTIVE: Destroy all enemy

All this way and you've finally hit the shores of East Anglia! There's no reason to get stuck on this level – if you've come this far, you should know all the tricks in the book.

Getting a decent grounding is, however, extremely difficult. You're under assault straightaway, so build up a base as soon as possible, including naval defences, tesla coils and three harvesters (you'll need lots of dosh). Watch out for landings from the south and south-east (block their



path with tanks and mines), tank attacks from the north and east and heavy naval assaults. Oh, and helicopter attacks too! Make sure that you protect your mammoth tanks at all cost – until you've got time to build SAM sites, this is your only means of air defence.

For your first sortie, aim to build-up a large group of tanks and head north from the base, across the bridge, concentrating fire on specific targets such as the turrets. Get in and destroy the power plants. Now work on taking control of the western side of the island.

The enemy onslaught does slow down eventually, giving you plenty of time with which to build up a huge army. Again, use a combined force of tanks, MIGs and the invulnerability option to the full.

For the final onslaught, load everything you have (and you should have a lot by this point) into transports and head north via the east channel, landing on the beaches. This is Great Yarmouth, presumably. Moving across to the west, take out the power plants first and clear up every Allied unit and building from there. You think you've finished, right? Well, actually you have. Time to buy the *Counter Strike* mission disc... 2



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# PC ZONE

Welcome to the *PC Zone* Recommended section. Here you'll find the cream of the games we've painstakingly reviewed and picked out over the years, plus those we feel should go down in PC gaming history as all-time Classics.

W

WELCOME TO THE PC ZONE Recommends section. It's here that you'll find, what are, in our opinion, the very best games ever released for the PC.

In an effort to keep it simple, we've split it up into genres: Action games, Sports simulations, Adventure games, Flight simulations, Driving games, Role-Playing Games and Strategy games.

The top ten games of each genre are then listed, with a brief summary of the game, review score, publisher and contact number. Most of the games listed here were awarded *PC Zone* Classic status (90 per cent and above), and some managed a *PC Zone* Recommended award (80 per cent and above) at the time that they were reviewed.

To achieve the highest accolade, a game must not only be very playable, entertaining and offer long-term appeal, but it must also be original and/or offer something new and worthwhile to the genre. To this end, we've included some sequels, which

although scored lower than the original title, are deemed better games (they didn't get a higher score 'cos it had already been done and therefore they weren't exactly bursting with originality – okay?), so this guide isn't a list of the highest scoring games ever reviewed by *PC Zone*, but a guide to the best games now available.

When you're reading the reviews in the rest of the magazine, please remember to bear this section in mind. The highest scoring game is supposed to represent a benchmark in a particular genre, and we will always be comparing new games with this, in accordance with the above criteria. As a result, you will

see games dropping out of this section as new and better titles are released, so keep your eyes peeled for new entries in each of the genres.

Jeremy Wells, Editor

# Recommended

## Action



### QUAKE (96)

The seminal 3D shoot 'em up and quite possibly the most important PC game ever released. Very atmospheric when played as a one-player game and untouchable when played over a network. Definitely 'pour hommes'!

#### Publisher:

GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)



### TOMB RAIDER (94)

The first game to take the *Alone In The Dark* principles and apply them in a new, in-er-face way. The play area is vast, the puzzles are clever and it's eminently playable. If you have a 3Dfx card, you're in for a treat.

#### Publisher:

Core/EIDOS (0181 780 2222)



### DARK FORCES (95)

Although not as technically impressive as *Quake*, *Dark Forces* is still held up as a better one-player game by some and yet slandered by others for not having a multi-player facility. That aside, it's a thrilling 3D mix of shooting action and exploration.

#### Publisher:

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



### DUKE NUKEM 3D (93)

The debate rages on, and there are still an awful lot of people who rate *Duke* over *Quake*. It's not as technically impressive, but brags gameplay by the bucketload in one-player mode and when played over a network.

#### Publisher:

EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)



### FADE TO BLACK (94)

The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical pre-cursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.

#### Publisher:

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



### DARKLIGHT CONFLICT (92)

It might not have a mega-budget cast or a film licence, but *Darklight* knocks spots off just about every other space combat sim there is. It looks utterly fantastic and the 3D engine is quite superb and very fast.

#### Publisher:

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



### PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING (94)

The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin to use live action in a positive way. Packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.

#### Publisher:

Origin/EA (01753 549442)



### MAGIC CARPET 2 (92)

The original game had us all wooed with its speed and smoothness and the sequel was even better, with new night-time bits, new monsters and a very useful on-line help system. Technically exquisite, the game engine has yet to be bettered.

#### Publisher:

Bullfrog/EA (01753 549442)



### TIE FIGHTER (94)

Still rated by many as the finest space combat sim ever released, it successfully blends all the kudos of *Star Wars* with a wicked new engine for super-fast *TIE* on *X-Wing* fistcuffs.

#### Publisher:

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



### MECHWARRIOR 2: MERCENARIES (90)

Of all the *HERC*-based games, this is the best. Successfully mixing real-time combat action with a thoroughly stomping engine, it's action-packed and fab over a network.

#### Publisher:

Activision (01895 456700)





## Driving



### CARMAGEDDON (95)

Awesome arcade-style racer that's heavy on the hit 'n' run and gameplay. Loads of different cars to choose from, plenty of tracks, three ways to play and a fab multi-player network mode make this one of the most entertaining driving games ever.

**Publisher:**

SCI (0171 585 3308)



### NASCAR RACING 2 (92)

A worthy upgrade of the original game, featuring a new, smoother 3D engine, more controllable cars, improved opponent AI, a simple single-screen car set-up and a multi-player network option. With the constant stream of headset messages that add atmosphere this is a racing sim fan must.

**Publisher:**

Sierra (0118 920 9100)



### NETWORK Q RAC RALLY (94)

The seminal rally racer from Europress is the ultimate in skiddy, slidey action. 27 (count 'em) stages, loads of cars, a fantastic eight-way network option and varied terrain and conditions make this superior to the limited *Sega Rally*. Go buy it!

**Publisher:**

Europress Software (01625 859333)



### INDYCAR 2 (90)

The only real alternative to *F1GP2*, if you don't mind going round and round in circles, but still crave that unbelievable detail. Technically mind-blowing, though a little chuggy on anything but a high-end Pentium in SVGA mode.

**Publisher:**

Sierra (0118 920 9100)



### SCREAMER 2 (93)

Whereas the first game cocked its hat at the classic *Ridge Racer*, this game is *Sega Rally* in just about every way but name – except that it's better in every way. Like *TNFS* it's very much an arcade, which makes it ideal for a quick fix.

**Publisher:**

VIE (0171 368 2255)



### POD (90)

One of the first racing games to support 3DFX, Direct3D and MMX. The graphics are awesome (understatement of the year) and with new cars, tracks and power-ups promised to be posted regularly on the Internet, you'll never get bored.

**Publisher:**

Ubi Soft (0181 941 4004)



### MICRO MACHINES 2 (93)

The console classic is converted to the PC as new tracks provide a new challenge. The easy to use control system means it's user-friendly for the uninitiated. This version comes with a track designer.

**Publisher:**

Codemasters (01926 814132)



### THE NEED FOR SPEED (89)

Exciting arcade racing action at its best with a good selection of cars and road tracks. Suicidal oncoming traffic and angry cops entrench *TNFS* firmly within the 'arcade' game sector.

**Publisher:**

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)

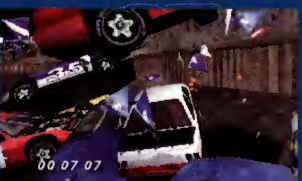


### FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 (92)

The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. Ninja Pentium needed to run the hi-res mode – but it's still great.

**Publisher:**

MicroProse (01454 893893)



### DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 (86)

Another sequel, but this one's actually much better than the first game. The tracks are much improved, the cars handle much better and there's loads more options. Worth buying even if you own the original.

**Publisher:**

Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)

## Sports



### LINKS LS (94)

The classic golf sim gets a much needed update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more gameplay options, gorgeous graphics and a redesigned menu and view selection system which make it better than ever. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.

**Publisher:**

EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)



### NHL HOCKEY 97 (90)

Visually slick and very playable, this 'all-new' updated *NHL* game features some new graphical tweaks and a smoother, faster engine. There's a handful of national sides thrown in as well as the most recently completed season's statistics and teams.

**Publisher:**

EA Sports (01753 549442)

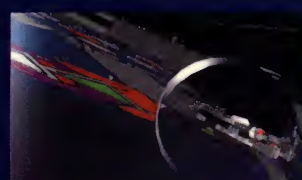


### PGA TOUR 96 (94)

There's little choice between *PGA Tour 96* and *PGA European Tour*, it just depends on your preferred choice of accents and jumpers. Both games offer fantastic graphics, a very easy to use control method and plenty of customisable play options. Golfing at its best.

**Publisher:**

EA Sports (01753 549442)



### PRO PINBALL: THE WEB (90)

Of the myriad of pinball releases on the PC, *The Web* is the finest. You may only get to play on one table, but it's so detailed and full of features it doesn't really matter. Accurate ball physics and distracting bonus games make it the ultimate in pinball action on the PC.

**Publisher:**

Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)



### ACTUA SOCCER (92)

The best soccer game on the PC, thanks to a super 3D polygonal engine and motion captured players. In two-player mode it excels, and Barry Davies provides some knockout commentary.

**Publisher:**

Gremlin Interactive (01142 753423)



### MADDEN NFL 97 (87)

This PC incarnation is well up to the quality seen on the console versions, with all the features and slick presentation we now assume as standard for an EA Sports release. The best US footie game on the PC.

**Publisher:**

EA Sports (01753 549442)



### NBA LIVE 97 (92)

Much better than the previous version, which lacked drive, this offering is well put together. With excellent graphics, sound effects and a hip soundtrack, thankfully it plays as good as it looks.

**Publisher:**

EA Sports (01753 549442)



### FIFA SOCCER 97 (84)

Despite the hype, it's not the best soccer sim on the market. If you're familiar with the control system, are wooed by glossy presentation and are a bit of a FIFA-head at heart, you'll like it. Otherwise...

**Publisher:**

EA Sports (01753 549442)



### VIRTUAL POOL (91)

Simple but very playable pool sim with an ingenious mouse-drag control system and impressive engine. One-player games are fun, two-player games and network links are even better.

**Publisher:**

Interplay (01628 423666)



### FRONT PAGE SPORTS BASEBALL (85)

An interesting game that nicks the best bits from other baseball games. Gameplay is a tad on the uninspired side as things plod along, but then this is a baseball game.

**Publisher:**

Sierra (0118 920 9100)



## Adventures



### ALONE IN THE DARK 3 (95)

Better than the previous *AITD* instalments, *Alone 3* is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation, that unfolds in the usual *AITD* manner. Now available as part of a compilation budget pack.

**Publisher:**  
Infogrames (0181 738 8199)



### BIOFORGE (95)

Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.

**Publisher:**  
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



### SYSTEM SHOCK (95)

This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the game. The graphics and atmosphere are invigorating.

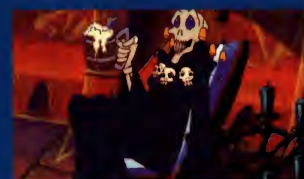
**Publisher:**  
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



### STAR TREK TNG: A FINAL UNITY (94)

A style oozier. As a point-and-clicker it draws you in, and at times you feel as if you're inside a *Star Trek: TNG* episode. Non-linear and beautifully presented, it's a Trek-head must-buy. Yet to be bettered.

**Publisher:**  
MicroProse (01454 893893)



### DISCWORD II (93)

Perfect Entertainment's immaculate follow-up to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the missing Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld 2* is a universally appealing adventure game.

**Publisher:**  
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)



### INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS (93)

Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metro-polis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.

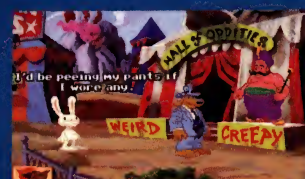
**Publisher:**  
LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



### LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE (93)

Adeline's visually stunning isometric journey through the surreal land of Twinsun stole our hearts in 1995. The gloriously animated characters really bring the static backgrounds to life. *LBA* is pretty difficult, but time investment is worthwhile.

**Publisher:**  
Electronic Arts (01752 549442)



### SAM & MAX (93)

Steve Purcell's hilarious dog/rabbit 'freelance police' duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase.

**Publisher:**  
US Gold (0121 625 3388)



### ECSTATICA II (90)

We dubbed it "An adventure with balls". It's hard but also one of the most rewarding adventures we've ever seen. *Ecstatica II* constantly surprises and is sure to keep even the most battle-weary adventure fan occupied for weeks on end.

**Publisher:**  
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)



### THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND 2: LECHUCK'S REVENGE (PRE-PC ZONE)

Anyone with even a casual interest in adventures must have this game. The graphics look dated, but the one-liners are side-splitters. And it's on budget!

**Publisher:**  
Virgin (0171 368 2255)

## Role-Playing Games



### ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS (94)

Following on from where *The Stygian Abyss* left off, this improves on almost every aspect of its prequel. Again the Avatar is the explorer of a complex, ever-evolving dungeon. Classic stuff with unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.

**Publisher:**  
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



### ULTIMA VII (89)

Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction with the exploration of the detailed world of Britannia. This is the last of the *Ultima* series to give you complete party control.

**Publisher:**  
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



### DIABLO (88)

*Diablo* is standard hack 'n' slash fare but the game's designers pull the whole thing off with such style that the overall game experience is addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat.

**Publisher:**  
Zablab/Blizzard (01626 332233)



### TERRIS (88)

A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but so horribly addictive that we're still playing it today. *Terris* has enough quests, puzzles and monsters to keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent.

**Publisher:**  
AOL (0800 2797444)



### MERIDIAN 59 (86)

This ground-breaking on-line RPG, though cursed with garish and horrible graphics, allows thousands of people to interact with each other in the same fantasy universe at the same time. It's currently one of the best on-line multi-player RPGs around.

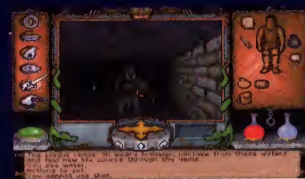
**Publisher:**  
3DO Company (0181 541 4082)



### RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET (78)

An improvement over SSI's previous AD&D *Ravenloft* RPGs, it plonks the player in an arid landscape populated by Stone Golems and vicious scorpions in a bid to fight your way out. The graphics are average but the intuitive spell/combat system is a joy.

**Publisher:**  
Mindscap (01444 246333)



### ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS (PRE-PC ZONE)

This one took RPGs away from first-person tile-based RPGs. In character as the Avatar, the player is intuitively capable of everything from combat to casting.

**Publisher:**  
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



### EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II (PRE-PC ZONE)

It's one of those 'olde-worlde', first-person RPGs, but its progressive, party-based gameplay and subtle story elements set it worlds apart from all the other dross.

**Publisher:**  
VIE (0171 368 2255)



### LANDS OF LORE (PRE-PC ZONE)

Graphics and gameplay! Westwood Studios' graphical flair shines through in this push-scrolling story about a witch in a purple cloak. Adding non-player characters to your party still keeps the game interesting.

**Publisher:**  
VIE (0171 368 2255)



### BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR (PRE-PC ZONE)

First-person perspective RPG with a huge game world and fairly complex battle system. Failed to take the RPG crown from *Ultima* due to limited character interaction, but a worthy contender for a second-hand buy.

**Publisher:**  
Sierra (0118 920 9100)



## Strategy



### SYNDICATE WARS (95)

One of the best strategy games of all time gets a sequel, and what a sequel it is too: intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to keep anyone happy.

**Publisher:**  
EA/Bullfrog (01753 549442)



### X-COM 2: TERROR FROM THE DEEP (94)

It's showing its age graphically but who cares when it's so addictive? With turn-based combat, resource management and sophisticated research trees, *TFTD* deserves to be in any strategy fan's collection.

**Publisher:**  
MicroProse (01454 893893)



### COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT (94)

...or C&C in SVGA with a few new units to be more exact. It's a testament to the original game's addictive gameplay that the sequel can get away with adding few new features and still be enormous fun to play. Still well worth buying.

**Publisher:**  
Virgin (0171 368 2255)



### PUZZLE BOBBLE (94)

We can't agree where *Puzzle Bobble* fits in *PC Zone Recommends*. Does it belong in here, with the *Civs* and *Sims* of the PC gaming world, or should it go in the action section? Who cares, as long as it's in...

**Publisher:**  
GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)



### MASTER OF ORION 2 (92)

Very sophisticated space exploration/strategy game that rewards long-term play. You can play it for months and still find new things to research. If you're willing to put the time into it, *Orion 2* will stay on your hard drive for aeons.

**Publisher:**  
MicroProse (01454 893893)



### SETTLERS 2 (92)

Manage little people, build stuff for their little towns, then kick the shit out of the opposition. *Settlers 2* is a brilliant game, but make sure you've got plenty of time on your hands. It really is that addictive!

**Publisher:**  
Zabrac (01604 232200)



### SIMCITY 2000 (92)

A classic game that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, trust us.

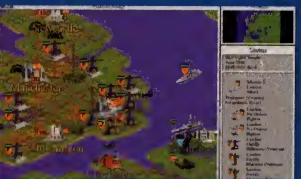
**Publisher:**  
Maxis (0171 505 1500)



### CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 (90)

So you want to be a football manager, eh? Well so does our Jeremy, which is why he spends his life playing this, the most realistic, addictive football management game available, and not a spreadsheet as Chris keeps telling everyone. Heathen!

**Publisher:**  
Domark (0181 780 2222)



### CIVILIZATION 2 (90)

Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one but it merits a '90s update and place here.

**Publisher:**  
MicroProse (01454 893893)

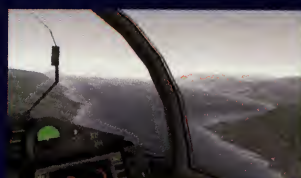


### WARCRAFT 2 (82)

*Warcraft 2* is C&C in Tolkienesque clothing, basically. It was a bigger hit with you lot than it was with us here at *Zone*, which is why it's gatecrashing our hot games section. Certainly a worthwhile purchase.

**Publisher:**  
Zabrac (01626 332233)

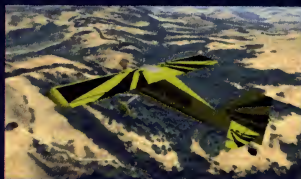
## Flight Simulations



### EF2000 (97)

With fantastic graphics and a very realistic flight model, this is one of the best flight sims on the PC. Not even Microsoft's mighty *Flight Sim* can topple it from the top of the *PC Zone* prop-head ladder. It looks gorgeous with 3Dfx and the forthcoming *SuperEF2000* with Tacticom will bring the game a new lease of life.

**Publisher:**  
Ocean/DID (0161 832 6633)



### FLIGHT UNLIMITED (96)

This was the first flight sim to sport truly amazing graphics and a frighteningly realistic flight model. You don't get to kill anyone (just like *Flight Sim 95*) but it still stands up well against today's competition.

**Publisher:**  
Looking Glass/Virgin (0171 368 2255)



### APACHE LONGBOW (96)

The *EF2000* of helicopter sims in as much as it marries fab graphics with a realistic flight model. The structure encourages you to adopt the same tactics as a real Apache pilot and the missions are challenging and varied. It's big, too.

**Publisher:**  
Digital Integration (01276 684959)



### FLIGHT SIM 95 (95)

The longest-running and most successful PC flight sim. An incredibly realistic flight model prompted the US Air Force to use this software as a training tool for their pilots. (But you don't get to shoot anything.)

**Publisher:**  
Microsoft (0181 242 4194)



### SU27 FLANKER (95)

One for flight sim purists. Admittedly the graphics are crap, but our reviewer raved about it. A great flight model and superb mission builder make it an essential buy for prop-heads everywhere.

**Publisher:**  
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



### US MARINE FIGHTERS (92)

The lovely graphics and a realistic enough flight model kept our Group Publisher Tim happy, so you can bet it's pretty damned good. Originally released as a mission disk for *US Navy Fighters*, *Marine Fighters* now comes as part of the *US Navy Fighters Gold* pack, so go and get that instead!

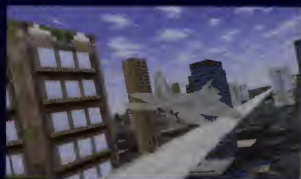
**Publisher:**  
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



### FLYING CORPS (92)

Action-packed WWI flight sim with neat graphics. Nostalgic gamers will recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WWI flight sims ever - this improves on the old classic to become the best WWI sim.

**Publisher:**  
Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)



### JETFIGHTER III (91)

Long-awaited follow-up to one of the most popular sims ever. Fly over three and a half million square miles of accurately-mapped terrain of most of South America. It really is 'just like being there'. Oh yeah, you get to shoot things too.

**Publisher:**  
EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)



### HIND (90)

Ugly helicopter in decent flight sim shock! For some people this game is maybe a tad too realistic, in as much as the real-life Hind itself is very difficult to fly. Purists will love it though.

**Publisher:**  
Digital Integration (01276 684959)



### A-10 CUBA (90)

Functional graphics (cough) for a game that captures the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Slightly limited with the absence of a fully-fledged campaign but great fun nonetheless.

**Publisher:**  
Activision (01895 456700)



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• ATAPI (IDE) interface

• User friendly, **DIRECT DISK** loading system

• Can be mounted

VERTICALLY

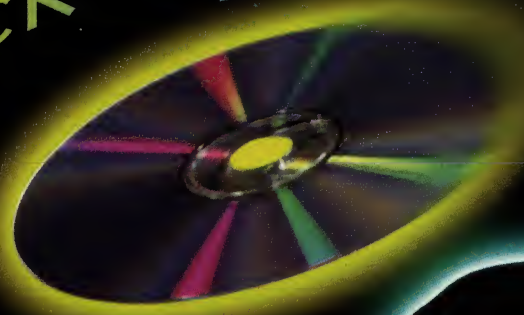
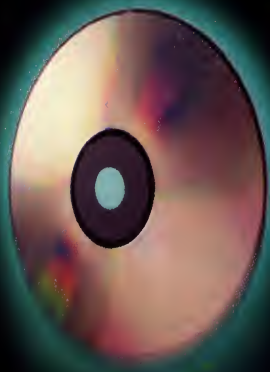
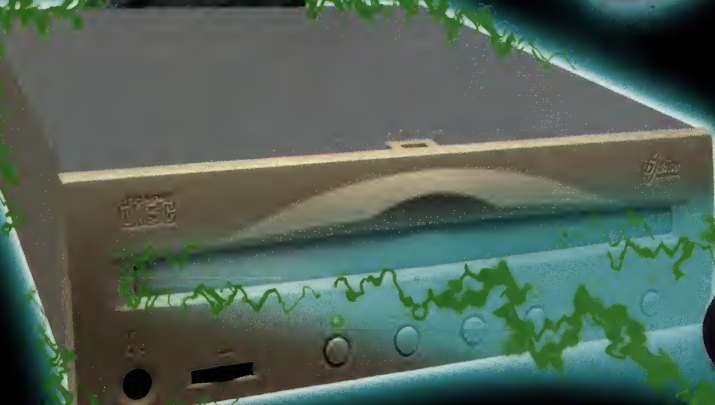
OR HORIZONTALLY

## TEAC®

### 6 disc

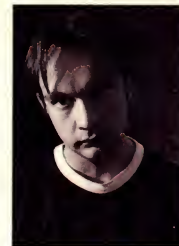
TEAC UK LTD 5 Marlin House, The Croxley Centre,  
Watford, Herts. WD1 8YA. UK.

Tel: 01923 225235 Fax: 01923 236290





Why, it's Mr McCandless, the Fragubergruppenmeister, misanthrope and raconteur. A few courteous replies, kindly advice and helpful info to our loyal readers are bound to be in the offing.



# WORD PROCESSOR

## Write in!

Send your letters to:  
**WordProcessor, PC Zone,**  
Dennis Publishing,  
19 Bolsover Street,  
London W1P 7HJ

Send your e-mail to:  
**CompuServe:**  
PC ZONE 100142, 2152

CIX: [pczone@cix.co.uk](mailto:pczone@cix.co.uk)

Don't forget to  
check out the **PC Zone**  
CIX conference and  
[pc.zone.co.uk](http://pc.zone.co.uk) if you're  
on-line.

NB: *PC Zone* retain the right  
to edit, rewrite and change  
all correspondence in order to  
make ourselves appear even  
more smug, funny and witty.

## WEB-SHITE

**W**hy don't you have a Website? All the other magazines' related sites are dull and totally crap – *PC Zone*, the Internet needs you.

**David Burns, University of Plymouth, e-mail**

**I**ndeed it does Davey. That's why we now have one. Check it out at <http://www.pczone.co.uk/>. We think you'll find that it's pretty damn cool.

## YOU'RE A FUNNY GUY

**I**'m not happy with the small print in your letters page about retaining the right to change letters etc. So what you're really saying is that your readers don't have an ounce of wit in their ejaculate-encrusted heads. You slag off the people that write in and still expect us to read your mag. You are a bunch of Quentins.

ONLY KIDDING!!!

Your mag is the best around and I'll read it until I get old and my body parts fall off in alphabetical order. I loved your review of *Theme Hospital*, and your writers are definitely the best-looking men I have ever seen.

One last thing: can all the readers please shut up about *Quake* vs *Duke* because it's beginning to get on fat grandma's tits.

**Loyal Reader Robert, Boston, e-mail**

**T**ext in red has been added to make this letter more entertaining.

## CYBERTWAT

**I**'m working on a Web page and would like to include cartoons from papers, magazines etc – can I use the brilliant *Cybertwats* cartoon? I'd need you to e-mail me the comix stripz as I only have a normal hand scanner which isn't as wide as the pages. I would be eternally grateful.

**Graeme Nash, e-mail**



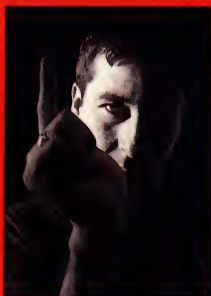
**Y**eah sure, no problem Graeme. Take the *Cybertwats*. Have them.

We'll send you some full-page originals as well. Don't worry about your scanner. You can have our expensive flatbed one. Hey, why not have Charlie Brooker's

## HOT Topic

Edited by Paul Mallinson

We pose the question – you search for the answers. Hot Topic: a new regular in *PC Zone*, which gives you, the reader, a platform to voice an opinion.



**T**HE BURNING QUESTION THIS MONTH was posted in the *PC Zone* conference on CIX. We asked our readers if the BBFC (The British Board of Film Classification) should have been allowed to cut scenes from Sierra's latest horror adventure *Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle Of Flesh*.

"No. No. No. No. No!" says CIX confereer **Tim Wright**. "Someone ought to tell them there's a fucking 'gore off' switch in the game."

Ah, so that's where the BBFC went wrong: they didn't even bother turning the gore off before playing the game! Tim continues: "As someone who has access to unexpurgated (cough) fillums (and can't work out what all the fuss is about the full version of *Zombie Flesheaters*), it pisses me off no end. If the game is that much of a hot potato, make the game available 'over the counter' or 'top shelf' only so that the kiddiewinkies are less likely to catch wind of it. The footage being excised may be less offensive to many people who may

find other (uncut) scenes far more disturbing."

As far as we can ascertain, it seems that at least two scenes have fallen by the wayside and hit the 'virtual cutting-room floor', as it were. One cut-scene shows the stapling together of a victim's lips, and accounts for less than a minute of footage. "A minute's worth of footage that would corrupt everyone in the UK and turn us into staple gun-wielding maniacs no doubt," quips the vocal Mr Wright.

Cheeky **Dave Coveney** is obviously letting his mind wander... "Which lips?! I mean... there's gory... and there's perverted sadism, see. I could understand censoring in some cases..."

Wish we'd thought of that one. **Ivor Benjamin** reminds us we all have differing thresholds when it comes to this sort of stuff: "Ah, but one person's 'gory' is another's 'perverted sadism' – and yet another's 'quaint gothic giggle'."

"And which is which?" **Mr S Wedging** is obviously confused by all this, so back comes



girlfriend as well. And move into his flat (it smells of fish). You can even lick his shower curtain.

## THE MAN WITH THE SCORES

**W** hat's with all the extremely high scores recently? There have been at least two or three in the 90s in every issue, and hardly any crap ones. Is there a reason, or are you all just going soft?

**John Smith, St Albans**

**H** ow the hell could you give *Red Alert* such a nauseous score in your Feb issue?

When you compared it with the original C&C it got about two marks more, yet you awarded it one point less?!? I love *Red Alert*, and was not amused when I saw this.

**Nicholas Skillicorn, Singapore**

**A** lright then people, since you're so wound up about it, here's your answer...

**I** want to have a go at all those people that complain about the scores you give on the grounds that it doesn't tell them which ones to buy. Granted, most readers want to know what's hot and what's not, but do they really want to be led around by their noses all their lives? Surely the reviews are just to give a general view of what a game's like so the reader can make a decision based partly on the mag's recommendation, but mainly on their own ability to judge what he or she likes, not the other way round!

You usually have demos of the games worth playing on your cover disks – why don't they just try the bloody things? If the games companies don't supply demos,

## Letters of the Month

### CARMA-BLOODY-GEDDON

**I** thought by now you'd have received plenty of angry letters regarding March issue's *Carmageddon* demo. Well, I think it's tops. If some software publishers are worrying about demos of games losing sales, then take heed from this one – I'll probably buy it before reading any reviews – it's murder on the streets.

**Steve Griggs, e-mail**

**C** *armageddon!* It's brilliant! If only more games companies produced driving games with realistic engines, smooth graphics and the ability to do-all-the things-you've-always-wanted-to-do-in-your-car-but-never-could".

**Nick, e-mail**



**C** *armageddon* is by far the greatest playable-demo acquisition you've had for years. It's just so compelling, and disturbingly satisfying, to powerslide through half a dozen pedestrians before flipping off a skyscraper and crunching into the ground a couple of blocks away as a twisted burning wreck. Marvellous.

**Pete Towns, e-mail**



It's not just us – everyone but everyone loves the carnage that is *Carmageddon*.

**I** 've just played your demo of *Carmageddon*, and after the asshole of a timer finally stopped me murdering everyone the only thing I could utter was, well, bugger me. Yes, this is the game I've been waiting for. Using an old lady on a zimmer to bend lamp-posts is the absolute pinnacle of entertainment. Don't make me wait any longer or else the small spoon gets it.

**James Snook, Feltham, e-mail**

**I** t's interesting that, considering all the furore and splenetic wankings of push-button-A-for-blustering-outrage MPs, we didn't have a single letter or phone call complaining about our *Carmageddon* demo. This just proves that the game-they-tried-to-ban offends nobody, except Daily Mail readers and Quentins who haven't quite twigged that computer games have involved killing people for over ten years. Spackers.

**If your letter is selected as 'Letter of the Month' we'll send you a bundle of T-shirts and maybe even a game. COO!**

**Ivor Benjamin** towing this soberingly official line: "Privately, it's up to you decide. Publicly, it's up to HM Customs and Excise, a magistrate, the BBFC..."

Which brings us back to where we started. So thank the Lord for people like **Richard Cobbett** for lobbing grenades such as this into the discussion: "Yawn. I want blood, guts, sex and harsh language – it is meant to be an adult

game for feck's sake. However, this shouldn't be gratuitous. If there's a reason for two of the characters to start shagging each other, then fine – but not just for the hell of it. Equally, the characters' lines should not consist solely of 'Fuck! Fuck!'. Erm, next!

**PC Zone's** very own **Paul Presley** has also been thinking about the subject and quickly restores equilibrium to the debate with this observation: "If there's one good thing to come out of this (and I should say that I have yet to form a complete opinion one way or the other on censorship), it's that game producers might start getting the message that 'adult' games shouldn't necessarily mean gratuitous blood, gore and sex. The games industry has managed to achieve staggering parallels with other entertainment industries in terms of finance, growth and consumer awareness, but it's still lacking in areas of mass respectability. Cinema, books, television, radio and theatre are all considered legitimate forms of

entertainment but games are still treated by the mass public as childish endeavours. With the BBFC starting to sniff around, game designers might have to start using real 'adult' themes (think of the difference between *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *The Godfather* for example) and it might make people stop and think, 'What's all this about then?'"

That's fair enough, despite the fact that *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is based on a true story and is nowhere near as sick and depraved as many people like to think. But at least we at **PC Zone** have seen the film in question and have been able to form that opinion because we've had a chance to check it out for ourselves. Isn't that what this is all about: we should be allowed to decide what we can and can't see ourselves, and not have it dictated to us by some faceless government official? What about other games – will these *Phantasmagoria 2* cuts trigger more wanton censorship in the not too distant future?





## Short cuts

## Choice cuts of reader wit (hem)

- PC Zone is shrinking every issue!

Paddy Doig

- Really Paddy.

- Is it just me, or does anyone else think that *Tomb Raider* is just, well, not very good?

Matt Barker, e-mail

- I agree – I find *Tomb Raider* freaking dull. Navigating some pointy breasts around caves has its moments, but Lara's nauseating translation of 3D model to supermodel leaves me physically sick. Is it just me, or does anyone else out there think that Lara is just, well, not very good-looking?

- While playing a demo of *Tomb Raider* I made Lara jump off a ledge and she broke her legs.

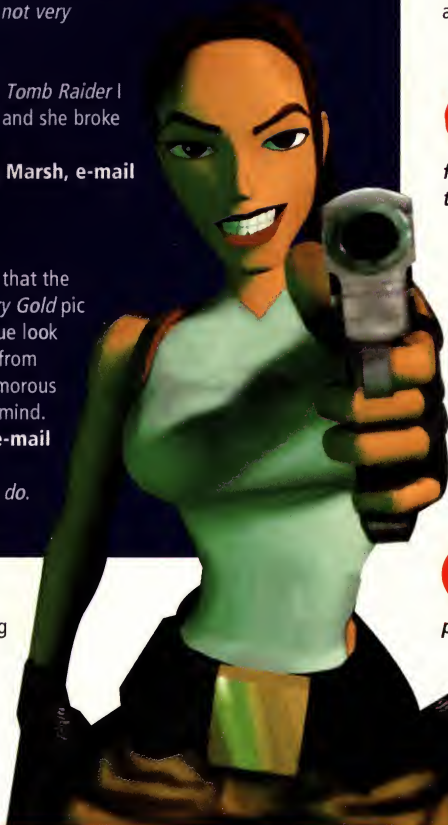
Mike Marsh, e-mail

- That's the spirit.

- Just thought I'd mention that the three wizards in the *Wizardry Gold* pic on page 151 of the April issue look very similar to the Scousers from Harry Enfield doing their humorous 'calm down' shit. Ah, never mind.

FaZe, e-mail

- Yes they do. They really do.



◀ then perhaps it's because they lack confidence in the game being good enough to be bought on its own merit.

Buy a game you know you like, or take a risk on one you haven't tried – either way, it's pretty lame to cast the blame

◀ **Ivor Benjamin** says it's a bigger problem than we at first thought: "This is almost certainly a warning shot across the bows of the games industry. There are plenty other games (*Quake* included) with high levels of violence that the BBFC may find unacceptable in 'the current climate'."

Whatever 'the current climate' is! **Paul Presley** can see Ivor's point, but notes a distinct difference between FMV adventures such as *Phantasmagoria 2* and the likes of *Quake*: "The distinction comes in treating a game such as *Quake* as 'a game', and a game such as *Phantasmagoria 2* as an 'interactive movie'. As soon as you start applying storylines, characters, plots and so on to something, be it a game, film or whatever, it acquires visual legitimacy, allowing the censors to move in. *Quake* is (pretty much) a non-narrative form of entertainment. It's a game – made as such, treated as such. What you see on the screen, however violent, isn't

real. The blood is merely pixels. When a game starts using FMV, what you see on-screen – while still 'not real' – has realistic merit and is representative of something that 'could' be real. Hence the ratings and the cuts."

So most games will be relatively safe from the censors? **Mr Presley** continues: "What you do have to worry about is the BBFC crossing the line and applying their ratings systems not just to FMV-based games but regular games in general. This could perhaps be the only useful function for the so-called interactive movie – a buffer for *Quake*-style games to continue to exist unhindered. Did that make sense?"

**Ivor Benjamin** seems to think so: "Made perfect sense – although what's going to happen when in-game graphics become so good the blood ceases to look like a bunch of badly-drawn pixels? With high-quality 3D games using fast systems and 3D accelerators, the 'visual legitimacy' you mentioned is surely

only a short time away. Basically, the ratings and cuts relate to the BBFC's notion of 'what is good for the people' and stapling lips together is a classic UK censors 'no-no'. It's nasty perverse stuff that nice British people shouldn't be allowed to see... so I'll be ordering my copy of *Phantasmagoria 2* from the USA!"

Which just goes to show that, no matter how bad these 'banned' products are, people still go to extraordinary lengths to get hold of them – just look at the problems they've got with grey imports in Germany...

Next month's topic: Do reviews in magazines influence your decision to buy games?

Write to Hot Topic, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing Ltd, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ, e-mail [pczone@cix.co.uk](mailto:pczone@cix.co.uk), or simply look up Hot Topic in the PC Zone conference on CIX.

at a magazine just because you don't trust your own decision-making processes to actually buy one you like!  
Anon, AOL

played for pleasure as well as entertainment. They also get very uptight about blood and violence in games. How very adult.

**C**ouldn't have put it better myself. Thank you Anon for doing my job for me.

## FOREIGN MAGS SUCK

**I** love the way U guys review stuff. If sumthin plays good, U make the world of it, and if sumthin stinks, U put it thru hell! More than I can say for most Oz magazines. I tell ya, Australia stinkx fer computers. NEway, U guys rule, so does *Duke/Quake*, *The Crow*, *IRC* and *Archimedean Dynasty*. CYA.

Dan, 'Oz'

**I**ndeed. It seems that Australia 'stinkx' (as you so quaintly put it) for most things. But if you think that's bad, check out Germany...

**A**ll the German mags are crap, and 'dull' seems to be one of the criteria they have for employing people. They are so boring, but I always have a good laugh reading *PC Zone*. And my swearing's improved tremendously, even though I've already been to Glasgow.

Oliver Segnitz, Germany

**Y**ou seem to be the only German who has ever written into *PC Zone* in possession of a sense of humour and are quite obviously a freak. German mags tend to take their PC games very seriously, whereas we think that games should be fun and

## PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

**T**he wit and humour is brilliant, the people are brilliant – and so are Cybertwats, the features, reviews and previews. Demos are okay (if they weren't all Windows 95, but I know you can't help that). Mr Cursor is quality and anything else I might have missed out is brilliant too.

Verdict: *PC Zone* 99%. Do you allow people to visit the office? If so, can I come along and have a look?

Andrew Kimberley,  
Leicestershire

**I**f your surname was your first name we might have considered it...

## CUT YOUR LIPS OFF

**I** was just wondering IF YOU COULD KNOCK SOME SENSE INTO THE GIT WHO DOES THE ON-LINE PAGES! They're a pile of elephant shite! How about including some good links, and maybe a section where readers can send in their favourite ones and make a Top Ten Links Table? Maybe a couple of cool Internet game reviews?

Please change your ways!

Adam Lowery

**C**oo. What original ideas. Some links – like, wow! Some "cool Internet game reviews"? Crumbs. We must sort ourselves out. Listen, Adam, I've got your address and some good ideas for things we can do with your face. ☺



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S736



As the countdown to the General Election reaches single digits, the Culk family had a rare visitor to the house - the Tory candidate for Feltham Green. He makes his way through the burning tyres in the garden and rings the doorbell... it doesn't work. On the trail of a potential vote, he knocks on the door. Oh dear, too late - he's woken up Culk's dad Ian, who's ploughing through the lottery tickets and beer cans towards the front door... (Fortunately, Mrs Culk is out.)

**Tory Candidate:** Good afternoon! I'm Timothy Planer, your local Conservative Candidate. Can I ask who you intend to vote for at the General Election?

**Ian Culk:** C-O-L-I-N! ...Sort this bloke out, will ya?

**Colin Culk:** What's goin' on?

**TP:** Hello, I was asking your father which way he intends to vote on Polling Day.

**IC:** How much does he want son?

**CC:** Dad, it's a pollackition... you know... on the cownsil and that.

**TP:** Yes sir. As *your* Conservative Candidate I represent *you* at a local level and ask *you*, my constituents, what you'd like to see change. Do *you* feel Feltham is lacking at all in any way?

**IC:** Yeah, we ain't got enough animals and that.

**TP:** Excuse me?

**IC:** Snakes and that. We want more snakes.

**CC:** Yeah! And I could feed them with dead birds and pigeons and that.

**TP:** I see... you hate pigeons, they're dirty, unhealthy and...

**CC:** ...We hate *everything* apart from snakes, me and my dad. We want a zoo at the end of our road, with lots of animals and big snakes in it.

**TP:** Hmmm... Yes, I'll see if this is a popular demand, but I don't think we'll be able to demolish the houses around here just to get you a zoo. Can I move on to another, perhaps more important issue?

**IC:** Fighting?

**TP:** I beg your pardon sir?

**IC:** I said FIGHTING! I like fighting. I want more fights. I want to fight *you*... NOW!

**CC:** Yeah, you tell 'im dad... chin-pistons galore and that. Hit 'im Dad!

*(Timothy Planer steps back and waves a colourful Tory badge in front of Ian's toothless face. Ian's eyes follow the badge; once hypnotised he settles down and forgets about the chin-piston frenzy)*

**TP:** Okay, relax... relax. We'll start again - the economy, finance and employment.

**IC:** I ain't *never* done a day's work in mi life! Look around and get a saw of what I got... *three* Fords, a roof over mi 'ead, a *clever* son, what can do compupors... and... *(He digs a couple of dirty fivers from his pocket)* ...this! That's *money*, and I've got all I need. *THIS* bunch of fivers says who I am!

**TP:** Sir... That's ten pounds...

**CC:** ...Enough for eight pints at the Sultan, not including my dad's tab.

# Culky Saff?

**TP:** Wouldn't you have liked a proper job? Making a fair contribution to society, paying your taxes, and supporting the health service? The Conservative Party can promise you...

**CC:** Dad done a conlibution, every single Saterdag and Weddesday - £50 on the lottery. He ain't won nothing never... so all that money he conlibuted isn't it.

**IC:** Fancy a cuppa tea? I like you, we understand each other.

**TP:** Erm no, thank you kindly, I've just had some.

**CC:** Dad's tea ain't good enough, is it?

**TP:** No, I'm sure your father's tea is fine, but as I previously indicated, I've just had some.

**IC:** Got any snakes in that car of yours?

**TP:** No, we don't carry snakes sir, just posters and stationery.

**CC:** What about lizards?

**TP:** No, sorry sir, just pens and paper and electoral pamphlets.

**IC:** What about saterlite dishes? That's what I want, one of them... *(Colin's dad points to a neighbour's dish)*

**TP:** Well, I'm afraid the Tory Party don't consider raising taxes to fund satellite dishes in Feltham an election-winning strategy. There must be something else apart from snakes and fighting?

**CC:** Yeah - can you get them to make the lottery easier?

**TP:** Do you mean make the odds better?

**CC:** No, I want them to make that card easier to fill in, you know, like with less numbers to try and think of every time.

**TP:** Well, I suppose I could raise that at 'The House' next question time.

**IC:** Yeah - and you can tell them other polickitions how you lost your seat, 'coz my son's gonna stand against you in Feltham Green with our own party.

**CC:** Yeah, I got me a compuser. It ain't a pentigon, it's a Sinclair. It does graphics and that, and it's got four colours on the TV at any one time. I'm gonna design my FIST party poster on it.

Timothy Planer needn't have bothered canvassing the Culk family - he could have seen that anyone who burns tyres in their front garden will vote Tory every time (unless of course their bible, *The Sun*, starts to support Tony Blair...) Unfortunately, for Counsellor Planer he's just made an enemy and got himself a rival 'candidate'. Still, I don't think he need worry, he bids farewell to the Culks and whistles his way to his Multiple Purpose Vehicle.

Catchuruz later!

## Vote CONSERVATIVE for Feltham



**VOTE** for Timothy Planer, married, two nice children, chartered accountant by trade

**VOTE** for Jobs

**VOTE** for Low Taxes

**A VOTE** you can Trust!

## Vote FIST for Feltham



**VOTE** for Colin Culk, single, best boxer Feltham high, unemployed for no less than 15 years, likes a drink

**VOTE** for large snakes

**VOTE** for zoos

**A VOTE** for more saterlite dishes and cable TV



NEW ISSUE

# MAXIM

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June 1997 £2.50

## BABE MASTER!

The smart way to handle a woman

**PHOTO SPECIAL!**

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MEET THE MISSUS!

Husbands of readers' wives



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'I fell 5,500ft without a chute'

**HOW TO...**  
Survive the jungle  
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Beat baldness  
Win pub bets  
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**PLUS**

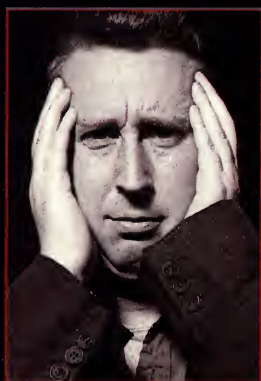
Jennifer Aniston  
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in-car gadgets  
smart denim  
holiday sex  
danger golf

# PLAYGIRL!

Kathy Lloyd makes it big on video

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## He's afraid of... Windows 95

# Mr Cursor



YOU MAY BE THINKING AT THIS MOMENT:

'Yeah, sure, do a thing about being scared of Windows 95, but why didn't you do it at the beginning of 1996? It's no longer relevant.' And that's sort of true. However, if I can elaborate a bit

you'll see where I'm coming from. Okay, back when Win95 originally came out I was indeed scared of it, because it sort of 'did things on its own'. You know? But, over the intervening 18 months, I've become used to it. In fact, only two months ago I could have told you, hand on heart, that I was no longer afraid of Win95 at all – and at times I thought of it as a sort of weird friend. But that was before my floppy drive started going funny.

### Onto the blower

"So the light just stays on, does it?" This was the beginning of an alarming conversation with a chum called Dean, who claims to be a computer expert, but who, I often suspect, knows bugger all. Still, when I'm worried about computery things, it's Dean I talk to...

"Yes," I reply. "The light comes on, the floppy drive buzzes momentarily, and then the light, er, doesn't go off again."

"And this is in DOS, yes?"

"Yes. I turn the computer on, get taken to Windows, select 'Restart In DOS Mode' so I can play, for instance, *Carmageddon*, then I get the black DOS screen, and then the problem occurs."

### A deep intake of breath

And here's where I was hoping that Dean would tell me it was nothing to worry about, and that he could state, unequivocally, that it was merely a harmless, albeit annoying, hardware quirk. (I could cope with that.) But he'd gone all quiet.

"Dean? Dean? Are you still there?"

"Hmmm," he mumbled.

"What?" I said.

"Hmmm," he repeated.

"What? What? What?"

"When you finish your stints in DOS," he finally muttered, "do you return to Win95 before turning off the computer?"

"Er, no," I said... "Um, yes," I added.

In other words it varied. It depended.

"Oh dear," came the answer.

He then unloaded some information: according to Dean, Win95 is actually an extremely low-level attempt at Artificial Intelligence (the equivalent of HAL after an Eddie Kidd coma-style motorbike crash). He said the system was capable of 'learning', but, also, was meant to be 'fail-safe' insofar as it'd happily venture into an imported program, but would only do so through a 'buffer'. I asked what he meant by a buffer.

"Think of it as a very narrow tube," he said.

I pictured a mini toilet roll.

"This tube," explained Dean, "gives imported programs access to the important parts of the PC's brain, but, should an anomaly

**Brilliant – my PC is stuck in a weird 'mind loop' and it needs a shrink.**

occur *within* the imported program – such as a crash or something – then control is meant to be restored to Win95, and the tube is so narrow that the, erm, 'bad bits' aren't, erm, allowed back through the hole. Are you with me?"

"I'm not sure," I muttered. "But what's that got to do with my floppy drive?"

"Well, basically, you've confused it," replied Dean.

"Eh? I don't understand."

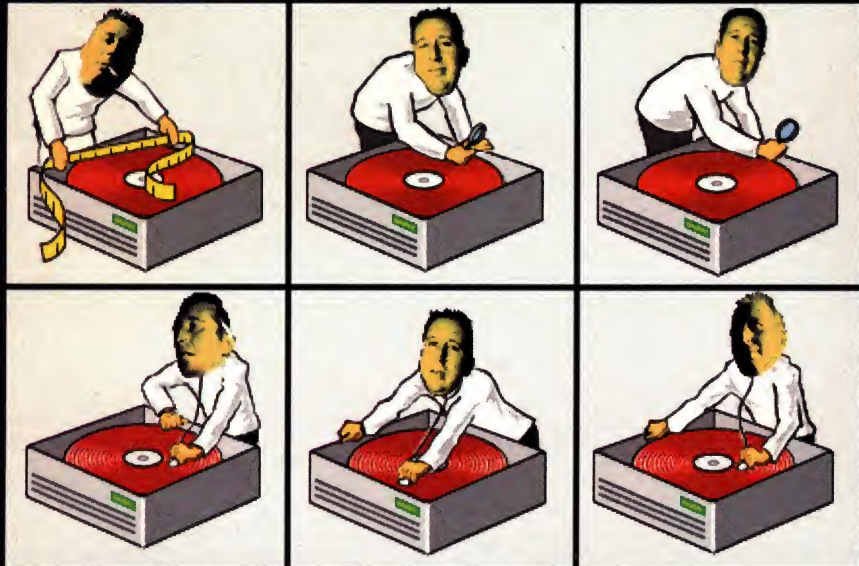
"Let me put it like this," he continued. "You've quit out of Win95, on numerous occasions, in a way it wasn't expecting. You've cleverly managed to circumnavigate its 'fail-safe tube', and, as a result, the way I see it, you've now got a 'spare computer thought' travelling about within your system."

"You what? Spare computer what?"

"Your PC is going insane," said Dean. "It contains a nugget of misinformation, but doesn't know what it is, where it is, or what to do with it. You need to have it seen to, urgently."

That's just brilliant. So my PC is stuck in a weird 'mind loop', then, and it needs a shrink. But then again, this is only according to Dean, who, as I said before, probably doesn't know what he's talking about. After all, here's a bloke who, when we were once watching *Fifteen To One*, answered the question 'Which American state shares the same name as the country's capital?' with this little gem: 'Utah.'

Nope, I've decided the best thing I can do is to continue as before and forget all about what Dean said. My remedy for the self-activating floppy drive will continue to be as before... I'm just going to pretend it's not happening. **Z**



The way to tackle Win95 is to ignore any dodgy lights on your floppy drive, and definitely always ignore Dean's advice.

"You don't use the Win95 DOS window?" he asks.

"No, *Carmageddon* works in the DOS window," I tell him, "but it prefers real DOS."

"I see," says Dean. "And so the floppy drive's light stays on all the while you play the game?"

"Er, no," I reply. "What I tend to do before loading anything is to access the empty floppy drive, wait for the Abort/Retry/Fail message, and then press 'A' to abort, which, er, makes the light go out. Then I pretend it never came on, but I know deep down that it did."

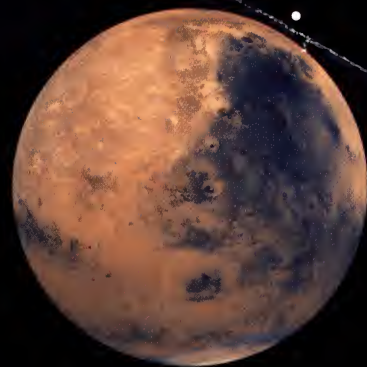
"So, forcing the light to go out makes you feel better?"

"Yes. But yesterday I was actually in Windows, playing a Win95 game, when the floppy drive buzzed. The light came on for five seconds, and then went out – all on its own. Do you reckon something's going wrong?"





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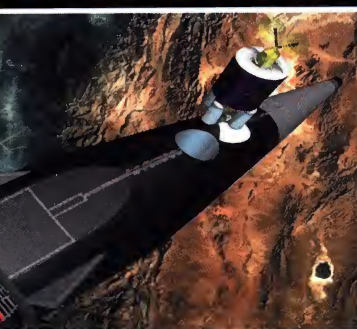
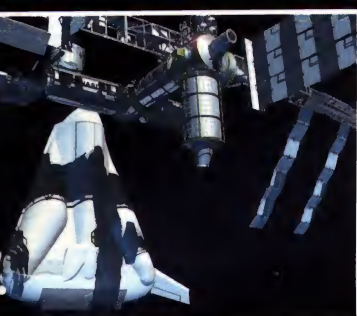
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